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THE MASSINGERS;
OR,
THE EVILS OF MIXED MARRIAGES.

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THE MASSINGERS:
OR, THE
EVILS OF MIXED MARRIAGES.

BY M. A. D.

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TO
HIS EMINENCE
CARDINAL WISEMAN,

WITH SENTIMENTS OF PROFOUND RESPECT

AND WITH DUTEOUS AFFECTION,

(REVERENTLY CHERISHED DURING A LIFETIME),

THIS SIMPLE TALE

IS

(BY HIS CONDESCENDING PERMISSION)

MOST GRATEFULLY

DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

A great man has said that the book which betrays a prominent aim is an unwise book. At first sight this remark reads well, but it does not stand reflection. Rather should the Christian writer bear in mind that the pen which exerts not its powers, feeble though they may be, to point some suggestive, needful, and timely lesson, is, in the saddest sense of the word, an UNWISE pen. He who seeks nothing higher than amusement, may not care to find a moral glide upon him; but the thoughtful reader will overlook numerous defects, if he occasionally come upon one profitable line.

The "aim" of this Tale will be discerned on a glance at the Title-page. Marriage between persons of differing religious opinions is, on the very face of it, so unlikely to promote the happiness or spiritual welfare of either party, that we must conclude it can find advocacy only from those who are unaccustomed to give such matters

any serious consideration, or whose interested feelings have, for the time, overbalanced judgment. Unfortunately, however, there seems no lack of such advocates, for, notwithstanding the strong disapprobation of the Church, and the warnings of all who have a right to advise, Mixed Marriages continually occur. That these unions become the fruitful sources of much that is reprehensible and distressing in the every day life around us, is a truth as clear as sad, a truth freely admitted even by the candid sectarian, a truth, be it added, which has long demanded familiar illustration from a Catholic pen. Frequent consideration on this point induced me to do what I believe no one has yet done—pour-tray, through the medium of home-life, some of the unhappy results of a Mixed Marriage, and thus, by supplying food for timely reflection, perhaps succeed in deterring not a few from a step, which, after that reflection, will assuredly be rarely taken. The examples here given have been met in the common way; I have not exaggerated them, nor even selected such as were remarkable for painful or irremediable consequences, as will be readily allowed by any observer with a moderate share of experience. But, Catholic reader, you may safely make that con-

cession wider, and agree, on the testimony of many a negligent or disunited household, of many an ensnared soul, that dangers so certain cannot be exaggerated, that evils so numerous, so lamentable, because injurious to vital interests of religion, cannot be too frequently or too forcibly described.

Should this book chance to come under your eyes, my Protestant friends, it is hoped you will, before perusal, accept the assurance of the writer's personal kind feeling, and also this ready testimony to the sincerity and the genuine piety so often to be found among you. With many of your creed I have been on terms of intimacy as kind as can possibly attract those between whom yawns an ever open gulf; and while developing the moral of these pages, or adducing apposite illustrations, I have conceded to the remembrance of that friendship all which conscience would permit,—I have invariably confined myself to authenticated Fact.

A word more. As this Tale, (though not destined, it is humbly hoped, to be without interest to the reader of mature years), will perhaps be most frequently in the hands of young Catholics, I have not cared to introduce the idly-exciting or the romantic, and have used the mere

framework of a "plot." This is the history of a tried heart, of ordinary domestic life, whose moral never needs to be surrounded with embellishments of the Imagination, but goes more surely to its mark when pointed by Simplicity and Truth.

THE AUTHOR.

Eve of the Purification.

London. 1862.

THE MASSINGERS;

OR,

THE EVILS OF MIXED MARRIAGES.

CHAPTER I.

CROSSLY GRANGE.

On New Year's Day the snow fell thickly at Crossly Grange.

There had been a considerable fall in the course of the night, but, during the earlier part of the morning the weather had cleared, with promise to continue comparatively fair for some hours. Later, however, the mists had gathered, heavy and dun-coloured, and presently the snow came down again, first in great flakes, then in a swift, blinding shower, which threatened to entomb every object in the landscape. Soon, the carriage drive of the Grange was obliterated, the broad lawn covered with heaps of half buried shrubs and mounds strange in shape; while the delicate laburnum trees, on either side the drawing-room windows, bent, beneath their irresistible load, helplessly against the panes.

Noon,—and yet the white veil descends, soft and stifling, from the bosom of the yellow gloom which has closed over the scene. The air is oppressively close and still, and it has grown so dark that lights glimmer from the windows of the Grange.

In the handsome drawing-room, ruddy in the blaze of a large fire, two ladies anxiously regarded the inclement weather. The younger had laid down Challoner, which she had been reading to the meek-faced lady

who reclined, among many pillows, in a large chair, and, as she occasionally looked out on the confined scene, endeavoured, by cheerful remarks, to sustain the spirits of the uneasy invalid.

"I am certain, dear Mother, they will be here directly: it is very unlikely that Mr. Burns will detain them by a sermon this morning:—he will have noticed the threatening storm and dismissed his flock before it began. They must be here directly:—see, it is nearly one."

"I am afraid they will cross that arm of the dreadful moor, to save time, instead of going round by the lanes and village," sighed Mrs. Crossly, who had reason to fear the moor, for, through an accident received there during a snow-storm, she had been almost entirely confined to her chair during four years. "How unfortunate that they did not go to the earlier Mass as you did, Mary. I wish your grandfather had done so;—dear, dear! To think he is caught like this, and Teresa with him! Pray God they avoid the moor."

"Oh, be easy, dear Mother—if they do return that way, they will have crossed it before the snow became thick. Hush—I thought I heard wheels,—no! But in a few moments now, Mamma."

The ladies were silent for a time.

"Look at your laburnums, Mary; how they darken the room! a little more weight will snap them, I fear. Ah, poor Bernard, how he used to nurse them! Never mind, my love. I am not going to think of sad days, but to follow your example, and be bravely silent." She added, after a pause,

"Your grandfather had a letter from Bernard this morning, while you were out."

Her listener looked up, with a quick flush.

"Yes, my child. He writes from Rome, where he has been for some time; having grown weary of Paris, and every thing French, he says. He does not say when he shall return to England: nor much on any subject. Indeed, the tone of his letter betrays a depression, a want of interest in every thing around him, which is very striking in a young man among new scenes, and

from which I am inclined to draw some hopes. Perhaps he will not be able to find satisfaction in anything, until he has returned to his faith and duties. May it please God so!"

Mary, with her patient face bent, echoed earnestly her mother's prayer, and for some moments they were thoughtful again.

"I declare, dear Mamma, here is the carriage," she exclaimed, looking up to smile at the sudden appearance of a neat phaeton, unheard upon the snow until close at hand. "But they have some one with them—let me look. Why, it is dear Father Lawrence. What a pleasant surprise! Indeed, I must go to welcome him."

So saying she passed into the hall where, in a moment, was the cheerful bustle of a welcome arrival. Teresa, on emerging from her wraps, looked particularly rosy and animated, and tripped away to her mother with a vivacity which left her no time to salute her sister with more than a passing glance of her bright face. Mary did not notice this in her pleasure at greeting the good and dear Mr. Lawrence—formerly their parish priest, and familiar friend—nor, until she rose from receiving his blessing, did she perceive that her grandfather was conversing with a stranger, who had evidently come with the party. A glance showing her that he was young, and of gentlemanly address, she returned to her mother, with whom Miss Crossly was laughing and chatting in high spirits.

"Dear mother, I am so sorry you were nervous about us—we had a very short discourse, so the service was over early. We met Father Lawrence at church, and nothing, of course, would satisfy us but that he must come home. Shall we not have one of our old happy New Year's days, since he is among us?"

"But how came he to be at our church to-day?" asked her sister. "And who is that gentleman, Teresa?"

"Oh, that is Mr. Selwyn Grice, a friend of Father Lawrence. He is *very* clever—from London, I believe. You know the great library at St. Mary's College is to be arranged and classified, or something, and he is to

do it, by Father Lawrence's introduction. I heard them both telling grandpapa about it. You will like him so much—he is delightful company. O, no indeed, mamma, I have not a wet spot, and am quite warm. But I will go change."

"Do, my dear. And Mary," cried Mrs. Crossly, with a little bustle of hospitality, from her chair, "go, love, and give all careful directions. Mr. Lawrence and his friend will need rooms—they will stay the night, of course."

"I think, mother, they will stay beyond that," observed Teresa, gaily, as she retired. "I have a great idea that we shall be snowed up, before long."

That Miss Crossly's prophecy seemed likely to be verified, afforded much amusement to the family group which assembled, some time later, at the dinner-table. Mr. Lawrence looked, indeed, a little concerned, as he remarked that he was on the eve of a journey to London, and feared that the roads would not be passable for some days:—in the good coach times of yesterday, travellers could not defy the elements as their sons do—but he received no condolence from, at least, the ladies of the family, who were delighted to have him once more among them; and that he required none, under such circumstances, was evidently the settled opinion of Mr. Selwyn Grice.

With regard to this gentleman, another of Miss Crossly's predictions was soon proved, by the favourable impression he produced on his new acquaintances. A countenance of striking intelligence, though plain-featured, manners polished and easy, and conversational powers of uncommon brilliancy, were points of attraction clear to superficial observation; and when followed the discovery that he was a man of cultivated tastes, and rare scholastic attainments, it is not surprising that Mr. Grice could make his way in any company, and, though still young, had attained to much repute in the literary world. It is true that Mary, on attentive notice, thought she could detect signs of a quick and uncontrolled spirit in his eyes and unguarded gestures; but perhaps that young lady

examined him with strictness. Teresa was wonderfully animated; her mother's gentle face had seldom been so free from a look of suffering; and Mr. Crossly, unlike his ordinary self, was conversational and urbane.

"I noticed we had the pleasure of your attendance during the whole of our service this morning," observed Mr. Crossly, to his guest. "I trust it will often be repeated during your stay near us. May I ask, are you in the habit of attending our places of worship?"

"Well—not generally," was the reply, "though there is much in your religion that I greatly admire. I was educated in High Church principles: but am far from having the narrow notion that the true worship of the Almighty is confined to any particular sect or forms. Surely the pious heart may hope that its homage is acceptable to its Maker when it bows in prayer with any congregation of truly honest worshippers, no matter what their denomination, or offers its spontaneous adoration in the solitude of His own lovely works."

"Take care your spirit of liberty does not hurry you too far, Grice," said Mr. Lawrence. "Remember how your favourite, Southey, has suffered for it in those lines:

"Go thou and seek the house of prayer,
I to the woodlands will repair,
And find religion there."

"I do, Sir, remember how he was baited for those very lines; but I cannot help sympathizing with their sentiment. Tell me, who, on a balmy morning, can stand in the silence of fields, or kneel in the waving grass, with no sound near but the gently-moving winds, no gaze but that of the smiling sky, and not feel his thoughts rise to the Creator in more admiring homage, more undisturbed meditation, than he could possibly yield amid the vanity and flutter of a well-attended church?"

"You feel so, perhaps, Mr. Grice," gently interposed Mrs. Crossly, "but we cannot sympathize with you, for *our* morning prayer at church is a *sacrifice*—the 'clean oblation' offered to Almighty God on the altars of the

Catholic Church,—and there only. It is this which enables our priest, in a few moments, to convert even a ragged barn or poor room (if we happen to have no better church) into a dignified and sacred spot; a spot to which our congregations come piously, often along miles of lanes and fields."

"I must confess," said Mr. Grice, "that there seems something grand in your spirit of faith. Your way, from infancy, lies among mysteries astounding to others, and, during this life, at least, incomprehensible to yourselves, and yet you accept them with as much confidence as if they were clearly demonstrable facts. It is impossible, also, to help feeling most impressed by the honest devotion evinced by your congregations during service. I was especially struck by that this morning—such a decent, attentive crowd I have seldom had the pleasure of seeing. The Pastor, too, seems well appointed, and to know how to manage his rugged flock;—his discourse, though brief, and of course simply-worded, was full of practical religion. By the way, is not D—— church the nearest refuge for a heretic, during a sojourn near your college? Then, under whose ministry am I supposed to sit?"

"Mr. H—— is the curate of D—— church," replied Mr. Crossly.

"Oh," said Mr. Grice, "a small gentleman, of slender proportions, and very nervous of speech? I have no doubt it is the same. I remember, being in this neighbourhood for a short time, about four years ago, I happened to meet that gentleman at a dinner party. His bishop was the host, and there were many guests, mostly clergymen. As it was not known, I suppose, that Mr. H—— always passed the wine, he was cordially invited to join in a bumper; but you can imagine the effect upon us when he fidgetted, simpered a little, and declined the invitation—saying, in his mincing way, 'No, I thank you—I—am—not—thirsty.' Ah, but he is a good little man, and a fair scholar," he added, as the hearers laughed.

"I recollect another anecdote of the same gentleman," said Mr. Crossly. "Some time ago, my kins-

man, Thrale, of Thrale farm, died, and of course there had to be a grand funeral. That was before his family became converts," he observed, aside, to Father Lawrence. "The house was full of guests; among them was Mr. H—, and, as many of them had come from a distance, they remained at the farm during the night after the funeral. I suppose the family were consequently pressed for spare room; for it happened that the coffin, before its final removal, had been allowed to remain, for a short time during the early morning, in the best chamber; and it also befell that the very room, as a mark of respect, perhaps, was given for the night to Mr. H—. Since you are acquainted with him, even slightly, you will know how timid he is, and how nervously apprehensive of spectral appearances. Well, it seems that he had quietly disrobed, untroubled by a suspicion of the purpose for which the apartment had been so lately used, when, just as he turned down the sheets, his notice was attracted by a black object huddled in a corner. He approached it, slowly, no doubt, and we may guess his sensations when on lifting it, he discovered a sweeping funeral pall: the undertakers on removing it from the coffin had carelessly cast it aside, and it had been forgotten. Instantly, the truth flashed on him—the little gentleman rushed from the dismal chamber, calling, in tones which caused many a door to open, 'Mrs. Thrale, Mrs. Thrale, oh Mrs. Thrale! how could you put me into that room?'

"'How could I, Mr. H—?' cried the widow, bouncing forth, in her nightgown. 'Why, who should I put in so soon as *you*? You, a clergyman, and fearsome of anything the dead can do? I'm ashamed of you, Mr. H—!' Don't you think she was too hard on her pastor?'

The ladies presently afterwards prepared to leave the table; and Mrs. Crossly, by means of Selwyn's strong and dexterous support, effected an easier passage than usual to her accustomed chair. He did not return immediately to the dining-room, but lingered, with a look of sympathy, while her daughters tenderly arranged her pillows.

"A sorrowful sort of existence, dear Madam.—What a vast amount of fortitude you must possess, to support it with such exemplary patience."

Mrs. Crossly looked longingly at the young man, who spoke with feeling. She would have liked to give him one of those lessons which a Catholic learns from contemplation of the cross—which teaches that suffering is a favour—that the life most sorely afflicted can be most meritorious, because most conformable to that of our Divine Model, the Man of Sorrows. But she was not sure that he would quite understand her, and so answered, gently,

"You know, I am sure, that no affliction can be long supported by means of human fortitude, but only by the strength of grace. And you remember what Job says, 'Shall I receive good from the hand of the Lord, and not also receive evil?' I had for many years a happy life, Mr. Grice, and I cannot complain because God has sent me a trial at the close of it."

"It was a frightful accident—I mean—it must have been, of course," he added, with a little awkwardness.

"Oh, indeed, Mr. Grice, it was!" exclaimed Teresa. Then, as he seemed to wait for the recital, she continued, in a lower tone:

"Mamma and I had been to D— that afternoon on some business, and we could not return home until near evening. It had been snowing in the afternoon, and more heavily than we imagined. As we wished to get home quickly, we resolved to avoid the lanes, which make a longer journey, and directed John to cross that part of the moor which we crossed this morning. Of course, we felt perfectly safe, thinking we were quite familiar with the place. I suppose, however, what with our haste, and the thickening snow, we missed, or mistook, our land-marks from the first; however, just as we were beginning to feel uneasy, we heard shouts behind us, and saw a lantern's rays, and then a gentleman came hastily up, to say that we were close upon the old shaft, to which we were going straight. He ran to the horses' heads,

to help John to turn them, but they could not be managed, for a time; and then dear mamma grew too terrified, and tried to get out—and she fell—it was so dreadful, I can scarcely bear to remember it. She was under the wheel for a moment—my dear mother!”

She paused to caress the invalid, who patted her cheek, and bade her finish.

“I hardly recollect how it was; but we got mamma in again, and, the horses being soothed, we went slowly back, till we met grandpapa, who had been anxious, and come to meet us. Then he gave his horse to the stranger, who went for medical aid. What a dreadful time it was! The surgeons did not expect mamma would remain with us—but, happily, she has been spared. You may suppose we often thought of the person who, under Providence, certainly saved our lives; but we never saw him again—to our knowledge, at least, for, in our agitation we did not notice his appearance at all. The boy who brought back the horse, did not know him. I am sure he must have been hurt, for John said that, while struggling with the horses, his hand was injured. Well, we can only pray for his welfare, wherever he is.”

Mr. Grice, who had regarded the speaker with great interest, stood in deep thought a few moments after she had finished her recital; then, with unconscious abruptness, left the apartment, and returned to the gentlemen.

They did not long remain together. Father Lawrence left first, and was heard, for a while, pacing in the gallery outside. Presently he came in, closing his breviary, and smilingly joined the little group round the drawing-room fire. Their conversation naturally turned on the new guest at the Grange.

“His society is certainly most engaging,” observed Mrs. Crossly. “Who is he? Do you know his family?”

“Well, I am not intimately acquainted with his family circumstances. I have heard him say that he has no relations living; and that he was early under the care of a guardian, a gentleman in the army, I think. He was introduced to me in London some

months back, as a young man of uncommon promise and attainments; which undoubtedly he is."

"Is he a Londoner born?" asked Mary.

"I think not. He has been abroad a good deal, chiefly in America."

"Is not grandpapa on wonderfully good terms with him?" observed Teresa. "Generally, he does not favour acquaintance with those out of our church."

"Your grandfather has had a bitter reason for that as you know, my dear," said her mother; but the object of their remarks now entering, the conversation dropped.

A pleasant social evening closed the day.

CHAPTER II.

SHADOWS.

Heavy snows, which fell during the early part of the week, rendered travelling an impossibility, and cut off communication from even the neighbouring village. The family at the Grange being thus imprisoned, endeavoured, with the good humour of country residents under such circumstances, to find within doors interests and amusements which they were denied without; and how well they succeeded will be easily supposed by any one who has had the happy fortune to be so detained in a fine old mansion, and among a pleasant household. No need to tell of the swiftly gliding mornings, of the light studies pursued under the able guidance of Mr. Grice, of the readings which his voice, unusually mellow and expressive, made charming to the least sentimental of his auditors: no need to tell of the cheerful meals, the social gatherings in those ever-remembered evenings. Enough to say that the week fled rapidly, and that when the thaw allowed the new guest to depart for his duties at the college, he had so far won the esteem of the

household as to be assured of a warm welcome whenever he should visit the Grange.

It must, however, be observed that Mr. Crossly, through some feeling long encouraged, was always averse to acquaintances of different religious principles; and possibly he would not have relaxed this strict rule, even towards so agreeable a guest, had it not been for a discovery announced early in the week by Teresa.

She entered the sitting-room one morning, her face so bright with glad emotion that her sister remarked, "Have you been gathering roses in the snow, Teresa?"

"Oh, Mary,—oh, mother,—such news! I believe we have discovered our deliverer from that danger on the moor. I do believe it was Mr. Grice. Indeed you may look surprised, but John is persuaded it was no one else. John says, as he waited at table yesterday he looked closely at Mr. Grice, and certainly recognised him: and he also noticed a scar on his hand: you remember it was hurt that night."

"I have remarked that scar on Mr. Grice's hand," observed Mary.

"Yes," pursued Teresa, excited, "and don't you recollect he said, yesterday, that he was in this neighbourhood four years ago? Oh, it must be he!"

Here Mr. Crossly thoughtfully put down his book, and said that now he recognised the voice, which had struck him as being not unfamiliar on his first introduction to Mr. Grice yesterday. The ladies were delighted, and for some time, talked of nothing else.

"I am so charmed with his modesty," cried Mrs. Crossly. "I am confident we should never have known this, had it not been for John. Why, when Teresa was telling him about the accident, he listened as if it all were news, and did not betray otherwise by the least sign. Such noble modesty in a young man, now-a-days. Don't you think so, Father Lawrence?"

"I think he has behaved very properly," returned Mr. Lawrence, quietly. "Priests are too familiar with the secrets of the heart to trust it much, or to ascribe to it many influences purely generous. Besides, perhaps his calmly observant eye had noticed honest John's

scrutiny at the dinner-table, and he may now suspect that Selwyn, quick of perception, had been made aware of the man's recognition. However that may be, this little incident occasioned Mrs. Crossly, at the first opportunity, to address a few earnest thanks to her preserver, and opened to him the doors of the Grange for the future.

During the next week there was very fine weather. The wind having changed, and frost set in, the clear welkin offered ample immunity to all who had been house-bound so long; and as the Misses Crossly were, unlike the generality of young ladies, very good walkers, they daily took advantage of this favourable change.

But how did it befall that this recreation had lost its charm for Teresa? that to take an interest in any of the simple duties of her rural life required an effort under which even her cheerfulness almost succumbed? She could not have explained her sensations, but brightness seemed to have been picked out of those tranquil days; elasticity to have left her spirits. Nothing but the lessons of self-restraint taught by a religious education, and the good feeling prompted by an affectionate heart, would have prevented her from yielding to what a thousand others would have excused as an insupportable weight of *ennui*. "I think," she pondered, "I cannot be very well; we have been so much confined to the house lately. Mary, be sure that we get out every fine morning; and in the evenings we will read our Spanish bard. *El Cid* must be finished before Sunday."

That is well, Teresa. There is nothing for it but to stir and work, when threatened by a lassitude which would waste your own time, and depress the cheerfulness of the household. You cannot possibly feel otherwise than revived, while the hard ground rings beneath your steps, the trees stand stiff and silver-crustcd under the clearest of skies, the wind bathes your cheeks in a "bloom of roses," cheerful to feel, and fair to see. Besides, you are earnestly expected by certain poor pensioners, from whose humble dwellings you have been blocked by the late snows: think also of the poor

children, untaught, were it not for you and Mary, who gather, glowing and rough, in the only school-room their pastor can afford them—the old barn—and who are so eager to communicate important news of home—adventures and mishaps which may have occurred during their constrained absence, that all discipline must, for the time, be cast to the winds.

The week passed; and on the following Sunday the little church of St. Anthony received its usual congregation. Truth must be told—never during the weeks, the piously spent years, which had seen Miss Crossly in that familiar seat, had her mind been so distracted, her eyes so inclined to wander, as on that particular morning. She was attentively regarding each well-known object with a newly-awakened, though an unconscious, criticism. The little church seemed indeed a nest of repose; how decent and devout the homely crowd. The discourse which followed the holy service was clear, practical, affectionate—surely Mr. Burns preaches uncommonly well to-day. So ran her thoughts; but she was too inexperienced to discover, without strict self-scrutiny, the spring which had given them life.

Service being concluded, the little throng dispersed. As the Crosslys left the sacred edifice, they encountered Mr. Grice. Teresa was thankful that she was permitted a moment to collect herself, under cover of the greeting given by her party. Her heart had suddenly throbbed, and a mist risen around her, through which she saw a pair of earnest eyes, and heard some question which she did not answer. There was no need to do so: the changing cheek, the shy glance, bright with pleasure, and then involuntarily averted, spoke with sufficient eloquence to so able an interpreter as Mr. Selwyn Grice.

Before she had quite recovered herself, her friends were in the carriage, and they rolled gaily homeward. Could it be only a few days ago, thought Teresa, that, travelling along the same road, she had held her first conversation with Mr. Grice? Surely they had known him longer—or by what magnetism had a stranger become so familiar? Yet this seemed a

more natural thing than that, being now so familiar, he should become strange again. Could it ever be so? Not possibly. Yet, when his engagement at the college was finished, what could detain him in their neighbourhood? She looked so wan at the thought, that her sister spoke.

"You look cold, Teresa. Are you ill?"

"I felt chill for a moment," she replied, coming out of her reverie with a forced smile.

"It is cold riding this morning—we will get out and walk, child," said her grandfather, kindly. "But wait until we have turned this end of the road. I wish Mr. Grice to have a good view of the Chase."

It seems they had been talking of the estates of Mr. Bernard Massinger, part of which they were passing.

"Stop, John. There, Sir, a fine place as any one could be born to, eh?"

Selwyn's eyes rested admiringly on the scene—on the fine grounds and tree-embosomed mansion, the rich pastures, the sweeping Chase lying far beyond. The party then descended, and walked on the frosted road, the gentlemen conversing together, while Teresa considerably drew her sister somewhat in advance, that she might not be within hearing of a name never to be heard by her without a pang.

"The Massingers are an old family, Mr. Crossly; and related to you, I believe?"

"Yes, by marriage. Bernard's mother was my first cousin, though many years younger than I. She married Mr. George Massinger. Bernard was left under my wardship when his dear mother died."

The old man knit his brows, for he was looking back on a melancholy history.

"Mr. Bernard Massinger does not seem much to favour his residence, noble though it is—but he is a young landlord, and will grow wiser, I suppose," Mr. Grice remarked.

"I don't wonder at the boy for avoiding the place—for the present, at least," said Mr. Crossly, rather abruptly. "There are reasons why the neighbourhood

must be painful to him, just now. I don't mind telling you, Mr. Grice. Bernard and Mary were betrothed when very young. It was his mother's last wish. They were to be married when she should be eighteen; that would have been—let me see—in one—no; in two years from now. Yes, Teresa is twenty-one, therefore her sister is but sixteen yet. Well, Bernard and they spent their childhood together; and everything went right until the spirit of mischief began to work at the boy's mind,—and heaven only knows how it was brought about!—he first neglected all his religious duties, and then fell off from our faith altogether. You may suppose it was an anxious trial for us all, especially for Mary, for they were sincerely attached. But my girl knew what had best be done, and she did it. She felt, Sir, as every Catholic who deserves the name must feel, that there is little chance of a good or happy life with one of opposing creed. Mary had already seen a proof of this in our own family, in the case of Bernard's own mother. Sooner than see either of these girls suffer half of what *she* underwent, I would prefer, Mr. Grice, that they should go unmarried to their graves."

He looked rather hard, as he spoke, at his companion, but that countenance was not youthful enough to betray any feeling he might choose to conceal. Mr. Crossly concluded:

"Mary broke off their engagement with great firmness, God bless her! He is travelling abroad; and now you understand the reason why the Chase is not likely to be his favourite residence, at present."

"Indeed he has had a loss which cannot soon be repaired," said Mr. Selwyn, glancing at the gentle and graceful figure before them. "It is impossible to see Miss Mary without being attracted by that sweetness, that mild pensiveness, which seems her natural expression; and from which I should scarcely have inferred that she could have acted with—with so much severity."

Of what was he thinking as he attentively regarded the sisters? The younger was the taller, and had considerably the advantage in point of beauty; but his eyes

soon fixed on the plainer, modest face, with blushful cheeks, and soft brown eyes, which grow bright and liquid under any emotion. Now, cheeks and eyes glow, conscious of his gaze, but it is doubtful if he be, at the moment, so observant of their charm as bent upon discovering the character of the soul they so ingenuously express.

Whatever caused Mr. Selwyn's abstraction, he soon roused, and seemed resolved to establish himself firmly in the regard of his new friends. He seldom made such a resolution in vain. With that happy ease so few possess, and which is invariably fascinating, he put the little party into cheerful spirits during the remainder of the drive; made Mrs. Crossly feel revived, as if by the advent of a familiar friend; and, by his intelligent society, again enlivened, for the day, the quiet atmosphere of the Grange. Moreover, while thus pleasing all, he contrived to give to Miss Crossly the impression that, under this bright surface there flowed a deep current, visible to no eye but her own. It is a truth, curious as old, that two persons, when in mixed company, can smile, act, and converse in a manner apparently natural and unrestrained, and yet convey to each other the distinct happy conviction that smiles, words, and movements, have all a pointed intention, and an eloquent meaning to be understood only by themselves. And so, by means of this glamour, this sympathy, it befell that Teresa laid her smiling cheek to rest that night, with a soft and joyful swelling at her heart, for which she did not endeavour to account; and he, more skilled in such solutions, could sleep with the conviction that he had awakened the warm emotions of a simple and tender breast.

The progress of this discovery during the ensuing two or three weeks need not be described. Every succeeding Sunday brought Selwyn Grice to the Grange—a visitor how welcome to one inmate she, at length, began to realize, with many a pang and doubt. Poor Teresa, these were the first faint shadows cast on her way from a world of pain and trial, a world at present unknown, but soon to be familiar!

"I suppose your labours at St. Mary's will soon be finished, Mr. Grice," said Mr. Crossly, one morning.

"Why don't you drive over, Sir, and judge of my progress for yourself?" returned Selwyn, laughing. "I should be too happy to see you there—and will not the young ladies honour us? To say truth, this is a pleasure which I have been vainly expecting for some time."

Mr. Crossly, with a little constraint in his manner, returned some common excuse, but did not promise they should go. He had never been quite cordial with Selwyn, and, lately had betrayed a reserve which that gentleman, quick as light in his perceptions, had not failed to detect, probably assigning to it the true reason: and perhaps it was owing to the particular conclusions he drew from his reflections on this point, that he contrived to effect the same day, for the first time, a private interview with Miss Crossly.

She was standing by the window, pensively enough, pondering on her grandfather's remark that morning, when Selwyn entered the apartment. On perceiving him, she coloured painfully, and might have moved away, but he detained her, and told her that he loved her more truly than he loved any being on earth; that the hope of her affection was his only happiness; that to be rejected by her would be more than he could bear. He spoke hurriedly, for they were not secure of many moments' privacy;—simply, for he was deeply moved. How the tremulous tones of that mellow voice knocked at her heart, and tenderly bade it yield, while, trembling, pale with an indistinct fear, she yet felt the full emphasis of each word which gave her the sweet assurance that she was sincerely loved.

"Perhaps," he continued, "you heard Mr. Crossly's remark this morning. My engagement in the Library will, probably, be soon finished; but whether I then leave the neighbourhood or not, depends solely upon you. The professors at the College desire me to remain, and undertake one or two of the classes. Let me hope for your encouragement, and I stay; deny me that vital

hope, and I immediately leave this place, and,—oh, Teresa, you are too good, too gentle, to doom me to such misery.”

He interpreted favourably her artless agitation and tears: he seized, to cover with kisses, her cold, slender hands; and then came a few of those happy moments which reciprocated affection knows, and can never forget.

“I need not leave?” he whispered.

“Oh—no—no,” she said, with a slight shudder,—her simplicity had been the first charm to attract him—
“You will stay—with us.”

And the words bringing to her remembrance her family, she paused; for at the moment came a rushing flood of apprehensions and doubts, which had, of late, vaguely troubled her, and were now resolved into one dismal conviction.

“Mr. Grice,” she said, with sudden sternness, “I have been in a dream. I am certain that never will Grandpapa—one of them—consent to my marriage with a protestant.”

“But listen, Teresa,—listen, beloved:—you are well aware that I am by no means prejudiced. I truly admire your religion for many things,—I am of liberal principles—every thing should be your own way; don’t, for a moment, think it could ever be otherwise! You shall be as free as air, and your household also—I will solemnly swear it. Why this continued agitation, Teresa? surely your friends will be reasonable, since I am prepared to make every promise which man can make: surely you will not, for a scruple, drive me to madness?”

Entreaties, fervent protestations, fell from his lips, for she still looked very pale, and had a heavy weight at her heart, which sought relief in deep sighs. This painful interview being abruptly terminated by the sound of approaching steps, Teresa escaped to her room.

There, through a sudden impulse, she knelt before her carefully kept altar, and remained a long time motionless, though in great agitation of mind, and, perhaps, without a distinct prayer. The pictured face, so mildly sweet,

of the mournful Mother, looked pensively upon her kneeling figure; the pictured hands stretched forth, as if to avert the descending clouds of a sore temptation. Kneel yet longer, child, and try to pray, for no evil can settle on a prayerful heart.

During the rest of that day, the two were unusually reserved towards each other—the sure sign of deep hidden feeling. In the evening Selwyn endeavoured, by a strong exertion, to share in the conversation of the family circle, but he was evidently vexed, nervous, flushed; and regarded her, at intervals, with a long, covert gaze of love and sorrow. She, of course, had a severe headache, and reclined in the shade of a quiet corner, to hide the large tears which occasionally slid down her cheek; murmuring, while she allowed her eyes to dwell upon that too-admired object,—

“Can I ever—ever give him up?”

That was a long and weary evening.

The next morning, before his departure, they had a second meeting, for a brief half hour, in the winding path of the shrubbery, behind the west terrace. There, while she clung to his arm, tenderly sustained, he repeated, with mournful earnestness, his arguments of the day before, and urged them with all the emphasis of Love's logic. Nay, more, he had considered the matter well, during a sleepless night, and, for her dear peace, as for his own, had another argument to advance, a favour to beg. Would she consent to let everything remain quiet for the present, known only to themselves, until a more favourable time to reveal it to the family?”

“I would not ask this delay but for a justifiable reason, which I hope, dearest Teresa, you will approve. Consider I am, as yet, but slightly known to your friends, and I hope that, when our intimacy has ripened, they may be disposed to trust me more fully than they might do at present. But what I chiefly want to say is this: and remember, love, in saying it I give you my utmost confidence. I intend to do what I never yet have done; make an earnest and candid inquiry into the tenets of your faith. I shall undertake this immediately, and although I do not (from a feeling I am

sure you will approve) bind myself to the slightest promise as to the result of this examination, yet, who knows what it may be? If I am able conscientiously to subscribe to the doctrines of your church, the greatest objection which you think your family will offer will at once be removed, and exceeding pain spared us both! Only allow me the delay I ask, my love, and do not urge an explanation which would be, at present, premature."

As Mr. Grice prided himself on being a man of honour, it is to be presumed that he was persuaded of the exact rectitude of this course before he proposed it to his listener. Perhaps too, he was afraid that she might, in this early stage of her attachment, succumb to any opposition that would be raised, and wished for a little time to bind that timid heart more securely to himself.

Teresa, trying to reflect during this hasty and tender interview, saw no cause to deny his entreaties. On the contrary, she had so feared the consequences of an open avowal, that she felt inexpressibly relieved at anything like a reason for deferring it. Of course, only while Selwyn pursued his inquiries—if they led him to the Truth, how happy a result! They *must* do so, for to any earnest, unprejudiced enquirer the glorious doctrines of Catholicity cannot fail to be lovely and convincing.

Yes, child, to the soul which seeks them through the gentle inclinations of Divine grace, without which it is impossible to be "unprejudiced," or in true earnest. This young man is incited to the search by a different attraction, though, if you ask him whether he undertakes it so much for the sake of Truth as of Expediency, he will indignantly reply that he is misjudged. Furthermore, he will pursue, in a critical spirit, the examination which should necessarily be conducted with humility and prayer, and will subject, to the test of his own esteemed learning and free born reason, high things which are of Faith. Many, before him, have tried to see the light with eyes as moted, and have been left in hopeless darkness.

As the experience of Miss Crossly had shown her no

such disappointment, she gladly accepted the hope thus offered her, and allowed him to depart with the understanding that their attachment should remain secret. But—what had become of her simplicity?—she was not quite frank even with her lover, for, in giving him this promise, she made a certain mental reservation, which she perhaps felt it awkward to explain to one of different religious principles.

And now, relieved of the fear of immediate trial, and assured of his deep affection, she expected to enjoy an interval of tranquillity; but soon discovered her mistake. Having become involved in a position stained by deceit, she felt all the dissatisfaction which is natural to a good, ingenuous heart under that degradation,—a feeling which, however delicate may be the arguments of sophistry, or the veils of self-deception, should be, to the well-intentioned, a clear, unmistakeable warning that nothing is safe, nothing right.

During this week occurred the Feast of the Purification, an occasion on which the household of Crossly Grange were accustomed to approach the sacraments in the little church of St. Anthony. Teresa went with the rest: she was yet an obedient child, though at the beginning of her wanderings, and she intended, according to the reservation she had kept in her mind, to make a candid exposition of her trouble in the secrecy of the confessional—that most religious tribunal, where the sick and the blind of soul go to be healed; where grief is comforted; where the dangerous webs of delusion, spread by Satan, or self, are rent by the promised Spirit of God, breathing, for the time, through human lips.

What passed in that enclosure is, of course, unknown. Teresa issued thence in tears, though during the rest of the day she had a happier face than she had worn since Sunday. That evening she retired early, and, in the privacy of her chamber, sat down to write.

We may glance at some sentences as they leave her reluctant pen.

“.....In great distress, but would like to tell you what lies on my mind.....The course of

conduct which we decided upon, does not appear quite right on farther reflection.....pray let us resolve to tell grandpapa and my mother of everything, and hope they will be reasonable.....I beseech you, do not ask me to see you again privately, until you have laid all before grandpapa."

The letter looked blistered by the time it was finished; and being directed to S. Grice, Esq., St. Mary's College, D—, was conveyed to its destination by means of one of the young urohins met early, next morning, on the way to school.

In the afternoon, Miss Crossly, after sitting in deep thought for some time, asked a favour from her mother.

"Do, dear Mamma, as we are so nicely alone, give me the particulars of that marriage of Bernard's mother. I never clearly knew them."

Kind Mrs. Crossly did not require much entreaty.

"Well, child, but don't ever refer to it before your grandpapa, for the subject is a forbidden one in his presence. He rarely can bear to hear his cousin Margaret's name."

"He was so fondly attached to her, was he not, mother?"

"Yes, she was his pet during her young days—he was more than twenty years her senior. I don't know what he was not to her—tutor, guardian, legally so indeed, on her father's death. She was as much the object of his tender solicitude as his own son, your dear father, Teresa," said the widow, with a sigh.

"He was occasioned the deepest anxiety when his beautiful little darling unfortunately became attached to Mr. George Massinger, a gentleman by no means deserving of her, and of another religion. There was no preventing the marriage, for she was wilful, and had her own way at last. The poor child repented soon enough; with her marriage began her life's troubles. Her husband was a man of harsh character—worst of all, he proved to be a bigot—I cannot use a milder term—and when a boy was born to him, he had it baptized in his own Church, and declared that he would rather see his children die in infancy, than be brought up in the 'errors' of our

faith. He grew tyrannical in the course of years; and when the child was old enough to understand anything, he removed him from the reach of his mother's influence, to the tutelage of a friend of his own, and only allowed poor Margaret to see him once a year. The misguided man believed, no doubt, he was doing his duty, and therefore we will charitably hope his wife's death may not be charged to him, for that she died of a broken heart, I am greatly afraid. He went before her, however—went in a moment, one day, while hunting. The only words, she, poor thing, said, when they told her of the fatal accident, were these, 'My baby is safe;' and being near her time, Bernard came into the world a few hours afterwards. She never rallied; but she lived to see her infant happily baptized, and to constitute your grandfather his guardian.

"We tried to bring him up religiously, and have, thank God! nothing to reproach ourselves with, through his unhappy change. He knows his faith well—may his poor mother bring him back by her prayers—She went to heaven through her trial, I hope, dear lamb!"

"The eldest little boy died, did he not, mamma?"

"Yes, love, he did. The gentleman who had him in keeping, (I am sure I forget his name, it is so many years ago), also, the woman, his nurse, came to the Chase with news that the child had been seized by a malignant fever, had died, and been buried in a few hours. This was while poor Margaret lay in a very precarious state, a day or two after Bernard's birth; we hardly dared tell her.

"There, my dear, I have made you look sad—Cheer up: it is all bygone, you know."

"But, mother, don't you think this was a case of extraordinary misfortune? Why did she trust such a one? He,—he could not have been worthy of a moment's esteem, much less affection!"

"He deserved both in *her* eyes, I don't doubt; at least, she loved him, poor thing."

"Perhaps she was a little thoughtless, and did not secure any promise before marriage, with regard to their children. Do you not think that if such a promise were

made, by a man of honour and feeling, too, a mixed marriage could be very happy? All cases are not alike, and there are many such unions. Have you never seen a happy one, mamma?"

"Why, you see, my dear," replied her unsuspecting mother, "I have intimately known so few people of another creed, that I am not able to judge; but we all know very well—dear, dear!" she exclaimed, startled by a sudden and violent knock at the distant hall door.

Teresa became agitated under an instant presentiment whose was that imperative summons. She quitted the room, and while crossing the hall, met a maid, who had just admitted the visitor into the library.

"From Mr. Grice, Miss," said the girl, giving her a note.

She hastened to her chamber, and tore open the paper, which contained these lines:

"Your wish shall be obeyed, although I do not pause to comment on its discretion. But, as suspense on this point would drive me mad, I shall at once do as you request, and place my happiness at the disposal of a third person."

Poor Teresa was not accustomed to such impetuous measures. She sat with cold, clasped hands, awaiting, in partial bewilderment, the end of this sudden storm. Long and distressing was the interval which followed; but at length she heard, under her window, without trusting herself to look out, the hoofs of a horse, and knew that Selwyn was departing. By and bye, came the expected summons at her door; and, with trembling limbs, she went down to her grandfather.

He was pacing the study, with a grave and annoyed look, but, at her timid glance, he seemed to soften, and greeted her kindly.

"Come hither, child; sit down. I have just had a visit from Mr. Grice. Are you aware, Teresa, he has allowed himself to form an attachment to you?"

She looked up, with a gaze of surprise, the cause of which he misinterpreted, and therefore proceeded:

"Well, you may not have suspected it, but so it is,

I regret to say. He has been here to explain his sentiments; but really there are, as you very well know, so many grave objections, that I should be sorry to see the thing go any farther. I could not sanction it, my child, nor could your mother. If I could have foreseen this result to Mr. Grice's acquaintance, no consideration should have persuaded me to make him welcome here. But circumstances seemed to require it, and I relied on your good sense and piety, my dear, to keep you out of any danger."

He spoke slowly, and thoughtfully regarded her.

She sat very still. Whether or not her grandfather suspected that she had gone a few steps into that danger, she did not know, but it was clear to her that Selwyn had not been as candid as she had expected. "Perhaps for some good reason," whispered affection—always ready with an excuse for him—at least as he had not given an explanation, *she* dared not—not at present—it might afford room for unworthy imputations—So ran the reasonings of a timid heart, and kept her silent.

However, feeling it necessary to say something, she murmured the only lucid hope that she had.

"But if he should embrace our faith."

"Well," returned Mr. Crossly, "he did not express to me any idea of that sort. Besides," he shook his head, "I should doubt—doubt. A sudden conviction, under such circumstances, would need a little testing, I should think. However, let that be. Another thing, Teresa: I am not at all satisfied with what he can say about his prospects. He seems to have no settled income from any source, nor any certain likelihood of one. True, his talents, I hear, are undeniably great, and may always find employment in what he calls the literary world, but, little as I know of it, I know, as I told him, that there is small chance of gaining a fortune *there*; and I expect, notwithstanding his brilliancy, he will always be poor. You must see, Teresa, that he is not a fit match for you. He ought to have known it. Yet, I must say, that when I expressed my opinion candidly, as was my duty, he

took his leave in a very unbecoming state of irritation. Very," said the old man, chafing at the recollection.

They had evidently parted in mutual disgust.

"Well, child, the case standing as it does, there is nothing more to be said. You know what your duty demands. I recommend you to put him entirely from your thoughts. I am inexpressibly thankful that the matter has been checked in this early stage. If," he added, perhaps growing suspicious of her increasing pallor, "you wish to know how duty can triumph over, not a preference of the fancy, but affection of years' growth, look at your sister Mary. Her example will teach you any firmness you need learn.

"There; God bless you, child. Kiss me."

He kissed her cold cheek, but the salutation, rare though it was, did not encourage her to a burst of confidence. Her heart rose up with a new feeling—rebellion—under this practical severity; and she left him, in silence, to rush into the grounds, and, in their privacy, break into passionate sobs.

We must leave her to the struggle, and pity her girlish grief. Within, all was tumult; around, all was dark; and when the star of duty is alone to shine over such a scene, no wonder that its first rays appear sickly and cold.

Have courage, sufferer; look steadily upwards: that Light can grow more warm and sweet than you now think possible.

CHAPTER III.

THE CLOUD.

During the next few days, Miss Crossly was seriously ill—the anxiety of her past and present position having proved too heavy for a frame unaccustomed to trial. Strange to remark, none of her family seemed to suspect the cause of her indisposition. Her grand-

father never again alluded to the subject of their last conversation; and although her mother and Mary sometimes spoke of Mr. Grice with kindness and pity, they evidently considered his absence to be necessary, and became reconciled to it with just as much regret as was natural for them to evince at the loss of an agreeable companion.

It seemed as though Teresa had to experience, in every form, the effects of a concealed and imprudent attachment. She might dwell among her nearest and dearest, yet feel strangely alienated from them—her heart a sealed book, whose new history of love and pain was unknown to those familiar eyes, and, if known, would have claimed in vain their approval or encouragement. There were times when she, hitherto so gentle, felt resentful and bitter under the unconscious indifference of all around her, and yearned for a moment's sympathy from that fond love which had led her into all this anguish. She almost regretted that she had hurried Selwyn's proposals, and charged herself with needless precipitancy; for what had been gained by the step? No reward of conscience, and only another sort of concealment.

During her convalescence, she received, privately, a letter from Selwyn, who wrote in a fever of love and grief, bewailing their trials, beseeching her never to abandon him. She did not intend that a clandestine correspondence should be established, but she placed the letter near, and hourly fed upon its devoted expressions.

She was soon up after that.

It happened, that no sooner had Teresa recovered, than her sister was confined to the sofa, by an accident which occurred in the following manner:

The young ladies had been walking in the lanes near the Grange, and, as they turned to enter the gates, Miss Crossly exclaimed:

"Look, what a handsome old woman."

A decent matron, in the garb of the poorer classes, and with the remains of stern but striking beauty, approached, regarding them with much attention. She

passed quietly; then, as if moved by a sudden impulse, returned with the question:

"Which of you is Miss Mary?"

Startled by the voice behind her, Mary turned hastily, and slipped, spraining her ankle. The woman kindly participated in her sister's concern, helped to support the sufferer into the Hind's cottage, which was near, and left, without further remark. The ankle swelled considerably during the day, and threatened to prevent any exercise for some time.

"Who is she, I wonder, coming to startle us like a beautiful old witch? She does not belong to our neighbourhood, I think. Teresa, it is your task now to attend our school-room, alone."

To the school, accordingly, Teresa daily went, accompanied only by little Minny, the Hind's daughter. One afternoon she dismissed the child, as usual, near her home, and avoiding the carriage drive, took a path which wound among the shrubberies for some distance before it reached the terrace west of the house. While slowly walking, she heard footsteps, and turning, saw Selwyn Grice rapidly advancing. At this unexpected meeting her agitation became so great, that, for some instants, she did not seem to hear the fond, incoherent murmurs addressed to her.

"Once again I see thee, my darling. I thought the child would never go! You have suffered, my love," he said, gazing tenderly on her.

There were marks of recent suffering on his own countenance. Her eyes filled with tears when she observed them.

"Oh, Teresa, if you knew what I have gone through, lately. This cruel state of things cannot last."

She sobbed, and replied that she thought circumstances could not, at present, be altered; but he passionately declared that they could. However, he did not then dwell upon that point, but upon his love and sufferings, and with so much eloquence as to inspire her with the conviction—(shared by how many lovers!)—that no heart was so deeply tender as his—no being so loved as herself. Presently, she told him of her inter-

view with her grandfather; but he listened with impatience, and soon interrupted her.

"Were it not for your sake, Teresa, I could never again bear to hear him named. His coldness, and narrow prejudices, gall me beyond endurance. I did not enter into particulars with him, do you say? No; that was a condescension which I would have willingly shown in return for a little moderation, or kindness, but which *he* was far from deserving. Besides, for your sake, I dared not, for he might have had a pretext to put you under some restraint, or otherwise annoy you. No; don't try to excuse him. I know how a man of any mind, or with a spark of generosity, would have acted under the circumstances. I did not give him any hope of a change in my religious principles? No; because he is one who might have misconstrued my motives—that would have been an insult, and unpardonable. Consider, that if I, as a man of honour, would not bind myself to the shadow of a condition on that point, even to you, my angel, is it likely I should do so to him?"

"But you are pursuing the inquiry you spoke of, Selwyn?" was her quick interrogation.

He hesitated.

"To be candid, my darling,—for never will I deceive you, for a moment—I have not yet fairly began it. Remember I have been on a rack since I last saw you. That course of reading, to be conducted fairly, requires a calm collected mind: but how could I command that, with your angel-face rising before me every moment, and driving me half-distracted?"

"Father Burns said,"—began Teresa, and paused.

"What did he say?"

She looked at him beseechingly.

"It was in the confessional, so I cannot repeat it."

"There! I guessed as much!" he exclaimed, in sudden anger. "Some such underhand work must always be going on, to spoil everything! You have been influenced by your priests, and so —"

Recalled to himself by her stare of terror, he knelt at her feet, and besought forgiveness.

"Indeed, Teresa, I have been almost out of myself

lately, and am not master of my words. Forgive my stupid folly. "You don't know," he added, when more composed, "what I have had to irritate me; not from this trial only, but at the college. Everything has begun to go wrong there, and would try a greater amount of patience than I possess."

At this moment, they heard the sound of a coach in the adjacent drive. The wheels rolled slowly towards the house.

"How dusky it grows!" exclaimed Teresa in alarm, when thus recalled to things in the world outside. "I must immediately go in—they will be sending to look for me."

"We part not, unless you promise to meet me soon; refuse, and I accompany you into the house. Let me see who dares come in my way, so long as your heart receives me."

"Oh, be pacified, Selwyn," she sighed, yielding to his impetuous caress, and replying to his repeated questions, "Yes," that she would meet him there, on the second day thence; that she would think compassionately of him. "Yes," that she loved him.

"Too well, Selwyn, I am afraid," she added, weeping, and with these words, they parted; he watching her progress until within sight of the house.

Teresa found that attention to her tardy appearance was diverted by the visitor who had arrived a few moments before, and whom she greeted with real pleasure when she saw the priestly figure of Father Lawrence. Those kind, calmly-searching eyes rested on her but for an instant, yet in that brief regard seemed to say, "My child, there is something amiss." She knelt for his blessing, and said how pleased she was to see him.

"But you must make the most of his visit, for it is to be very brief," observed Mary, from her sofa. "Father Lawrence has been saying that he must leave to-morrow afternoon, and would not have called only he has news to give us. News from London! When will you satisfy our curiosity, Father?"

"After tea—plenty of time after tea. You don't seem to pity a traveller," he rejoined.

But though he spoke gaily, he looked grave the next moment.

It was later in the evening than he had promised, and after he had been closeted with Mr. Crossly, that the good priest joined the rest of the family; and prepared to answer the interrogations of the expectant auditors, whose faces grew serious when looking at him.

"You are aware that I have come direct from London, where I lately had some business. I met there an old acquaintance—Bernard Massinger."

"Bernard!" repeated the group.

Mrs. Crossly removed her spectacles, and looked at the speaker—Teresa, at her sister.

"Yes," continued Mr. Lawrence. "He has returned from the Continent, and appears in no haste to leave London. I rather expect he may take up his residence there—at least not return to the Chase. But he was not quite frank respecting his intention, nor, I thought, very cordial in his manner to me. I did not feel inclined to visit him more than twice, perceiving that I was not likely to be of any benefit to him."

"Oh, Sir, and he loved you since he was a little child!" exclaimed Teresa.

Mr. Lawrence shook his head.

"Young men easily forget their early associations, my dear. Bernard is not what you remember him; he is rapidly changing from all we liked to see him."

"You mean a good deal, Sir," said Mary; "I entreat you to give us your impressions. Do not fear, dear Father."

"Well, my child, I grieve to say that his tour on the Continent has been a very unfortunate thing for him. He has acquired some extravagant habits which will lead him to frightful lengths, unless soon mended. Worst of all, his wavering faith appears to be nearly lost in some rationalist sentiments he has picked up abroad. I fear that young man is on the high road to infidelity."

His hearers shuddered.

"My poor boy—my poor boy," repeated Mrs. Crossly.

"Oh, Bernard, is it you?" said Teresa. "It seems so short a time since he was a pretty boy, serving at Mass, in his white surplice. Is it possible, Sir, that he could really fall so, after so pious an education?"

"Ah, my dear child, you little know how easily, when the obedience of faith is once gone, the mind loses its power to believe even in Revelation. I know, I have almost invariably found—and I think mine is the general experience—that when a Catholic unhappily abandons the Truth, he finds nothing to satisfy him in any sectarian creed, but goes down, in his heart, whatever he may appear, into the depths of scepticism. So dangerous is it to insult the gift of Faith,—so preciously to be guarded is the grace which keeps us in humble obedience to the Church. But I am sorry I have brought such bad news." For they were all in tears. "We must trust in the Infinite Mercy of God, and pray that the poor boy may be brought home after his wandering. Be patient, Mary. You are early tried, but you know where to find comfort."

"Oh yes, yes," she whispered, and, with closed hands and eyes, went a way which had become familiar to her—the way of Him who has gone before His creatures, bearing a Cross.

The family soon retired to rest. Teresa, having helped her sister to her room, lingered even longer than usual over little affectionate services. She felt unusually drawn to the heart under a sorrow, which though soft and patient, was as real as her own.

"You will pray for him—prayer does so much," said Mary, as her sister arranged the position of her uneasy foot.

"Indeed, yes," murmured Teresa, but with slightly confused face: of late so many distractions and human emotions had intruded upon her prayer.

She continued, after a pause,

"I am thinking, Mary—I have often thought, might not your influence have some good effect upon Bernard? Do you think it is quite wise, for his sake, to break

everything off, so entirely? Perhaps if you were to represent to him,—if you were to urge——”

“Dear Sister, what duty, or truth, could I urge upon him which he does not already very well know?”

“But how can you *bear* to be silent, under such circumstances, at least without having attempted to move him? He loves you, so your influence would be different from any other, and might be the means—you cannot tell, Mary.”

The younger sister gravely regarded the elder, pausing, before she replied,

“Teresa, you suggest a fond temptation, which I had to repel some time ago. Even if any influence of mine were successful, it might not last: I could not trust it. God alone can do this work. Besides, it were not safe for me to interfere—because I love, I must shun him. If you had ever had a misplaced attachment, dearest sister, you would understand how very easy is self-delusion, on such a point as this. No path can be safely followed but that of the plainest duty. But may you never have such a hard experience! Good night.”

Teresa did not sleep that night. Her sister's words rang in her ears, and insisted on reflection. She could not blind herself to the fact that she was in an unworthy, as well as a painful, position. Was she in danger, too? She had not known that she had come so far on the road; everything had seemed reasonable as she walked. What persuasions had actuated her? At this question, she mentally went back, step by step, until she grew confused, and desisted from the retrospection.

But what had she best do for the future? Was ever one so much in need of kind advice? Presently, a thought occurred to her. She would tell Father Lawrence of all,—from the beginning, so that he might judge clearly; in confidence, so that no harm could be done. “No harm could be done?” Teresa, what does that mean?

But she has given up her self-examination in relief, after having made that resolution.

She kept it, notwithstanding many temptations to the

contrary. Watching an opportunity, next morning, when Mr. Lawrence walked on the terrace with his breviary, she lingered until he seemed at liberty, and then timidly approached. He kindly invited her near.

"Come hither, child. A fine morning to walk. You have something to say to me, I think?"

She suddenly broke into tears—agitated, ashamed, yet thankful for her counsellor.

"Oh, father, I have so much to say, and am so very, very unhappy!"

"I saw that, my dear, when I first looked at you last night. But you will open your heart to me, and be better. Come, come—cheer up. See—we will walk down here, and be undisturbed."

They paced slowly through the shrubbery within whose shade she had talked with Selwyn, the day before.

"I—I am not free to tell you except in strict confidence," she said. "I should like you to consider it a manifestation of conscience, if you please, Father."

"Very well."

With something of old-fashioned precision natural to him, he buttoned his clerical surtout closely over his breast, bent his grave cheek to listen.

She began at once; and by dint of encouragement, and some probing, gave a tolerably clear account of things past and present. When she had finished, he reflected, and sighed.

"My poor child, you have suffered, and been tempted. You have been tried, poor little heart, attempting to guide itself. Come, let us talk about it. In the first place, you seem sanguine in your hope of a favourable result to the enquiry he has promised to make, and, in any case, of his indulgence towards yourself in the exercises of your faith?"

"Yes, certainly, father, no promises could be kinder or more positive than those he has made me. I would doubt anything sooner than his sincerity. Oh, indeed he would never deceive me! Besides, I cannot help feeling sure that he will become a Catholic, because he approves of so much about our religion."

Mr. Lawrence shook his head, thoughtfully.

"I cannot share in your opinion. At least, such a result would be contrary to the impressions I have received of his character,—though I speak only from impressions, since I do not know him intimately, and have not lately held with him familiar conversations, as you have. I think that the prejudices of a mind like his, and of an education like his, can only be removed by an extraordinary grace; still, Almighty God breathes where He wills, so I do not wish to destroy your hopes. But now, supposing you are disappointed in these expectations, and you still marry this person, it is your duty, my child, to look forward to one contingency, and, without any false delicacy, to obtain his most distinct promise about it. You tell me he has agreed that you shall be free to follow the exercises of your religion; now, supposing you become a parent?"

"Nothing could be more explicit than the promises he has given me on that point," said Teresa, quickly, but distinctly.

"He consents that any child, or children, shall be baptised, and brought up Catholic? Well, God grant that you may never have a trial on that account!

"You do not know," continued the good priest, after a pause, "how often I have seen these mixed marriages—this union of Catholic with one separated from the Church, and the unhappy results which have almost invariably followed. Consider, with so great a discord always existing, where can reasonably be expected that unity so necessary to the peace of a married pair? If the husband be a man of no strictly religious feeling, it too often happens that the wife, led by her affection for him, is insensibly influenced by his example, neglects her pious practices; and, in the course of time, the heads of the family lead careless lives, to their mutual disedification, and that of their children. If the husband takes a religious thought, there ensue even more lamentable effects, for then, ten to one, he makes the training of his children to his own sectarian principles a point of conscience, and there is misery for the Catholic mother at

once. She *must* oppose her own teaching to his: whilst the children are young, she may contrive to have the upper influence, as generally happens, but when they are older, they incline to choose for themselves between the antagonistic creeds. If only one fell away, what can ever make atonement? In any case, consider her trials; ask what happiness, or affection, can long exist in that divided household?"

"But, surely, Sir, the picture is a little too sad. There must be exceptional cases—cases where the faithful love and tenderest patience of the wife," her cheek glowed, "must keep her power over the heart, and enable her to maintain peace, and yet carry her point. Besides, if such unhappy consequences always followed mixed marriages, I should think the Church would have forbidden them altogether, which she has not done."

"Stop, my dear. I do not deny that when the mutual attachment of the parties is very strong, they may live without dissension during the first years of their union, but, eventually, either the gentleness of that complaisance wears off, or their very affection, by making each avoid anything that could displease or alienate the other, draws them gradually into a supineness, the effects of which are sure to be mischievous to their own souls, and most mischievous to the souls of their neglected children. This state of things is of such lamentably frequent occurrence, that it must strongly impress every serious, observant mind; and I assure you that most Protestants, and persons of other denominations, when they are at all religiously inclined, disapprove of such unions quite as much as we do. It is natural for you to suppose that yours would be an exceptional happy case—poor dear child, of course you do! but don't you think that every one shares the same confident expectation? As for your other remark, the Church may not, for good reasons, directly *forbid* such marriages, but she disapproves, she cannot bless. Is not this, alone, sufficient to deter a good Catholic from such a step? Dwell on this reflection, Teresa. You

have hitherto been a pious child, and I do not expect that permanent happiness will be yours in a state which has not been sanctioned by the approval of your conscience, and the benediction of the Church."

Her heart gave an involuntary assent to this remark. Had she been happy, for a day, since the commencement of this concealed intercourse?

He resumed.

"There are other objections in this case which claim consideration from a sensible person, and cannot be overlooked. Though I am not confidently acquainted with the affairs of Mr. Grice, I am aware that his worldly position is not a prosperous one, and—"

She interrupted him.

"I do not regard that consideration—I don't value riches. I could be happy with him in poverty."

"I have no doubt, my child, that you are ready to sacrifice your comfort for his sake, and, to a certain extent, would most sweetly do so. I have not a doubt of it. But still, you must believe that when house-keeping begins on slender means, and responsibilities go on increasing, there follows a train of inconveniences, and even of hardships, trying to bear, and which you, brought up as you have been, cannot even imagine. I am afraid you would have the prospect of a very reduced condition, for some years, at least, however successful might be his literary exertions. As your grandfather has such great objections to Mr. Grice, and is strong in his—feelings—as we all know, I think it would be advisable for neither of you to form any expectations of immediate assistance from him."

"Oh, Sir!" she exclaimed, with haste, "you don't know Selwyn—I am sure he *never* had such an expectation!"

"Well, it may be so. However, I think he invites you to a straitened lot with too much confidence. Teresa, I spoke just now of your grandfather; it behoves you to reflect that, if you persevere in this attachment, it will be under his disapproval, and that of your other friends. You cannot be surprised at this:

their objections are reasonable, and will not soon be removed."

"I know it—I know it with sorrow. But if my dear friends would sympathize a little—if everything were known, and they were considerate, I should not be in this distress. Oh, father, when they all turn against us, I love him! I love him!"

The kind priest soothed the passionate burst of tears which followed.

"I wish," he sighed, "I wish, my precious child, that I had been with you at the beginning of this unfortunate affair. Your heart knew not its own feelings; you would have opened it to me; you would, I know; and all this might have been foreseen and avoided. Nothing would have been so good for you, then, as to have left his dangerous society. I think nothing might be so good for you, even now. Now listen to what I am about to say. You sought me for help, as well as sympathy, did you not? And you will obey what I shall propose?"

"Anything not impossible, dear father."

"Well. Can you not arrange to go for a visit, for a short time, to some of your relations? The Thrales invited you before Christmas, I remember. If you could but make the exertion, I believe that interval of quiet and reflection would be of invaluable service to you. As things are at present, what can you do? Your mind is constantly receiving fresh excitement. You are involved in a clandestine intercourse, (which of itself makes you unhappy) and you may be gradually tempted into you know not what danger. Besides," she was listening thoughtfully, "don't you feel that the change will be of benefit also to your health? You are worn and nervous; this state of disturbance will soon cause you a serious illness, I can tell you, as well as a doctor could. Do, my dear, resolve to make the effort."

"After a few days," he continued, "I shall be in the neighbourhood of Thrale Farm, for a week or two, and we shall have leisure there to talk over matters, and see what had best be arranged for the future."

Assent cost Teresa a struggle, the moderation of the proposal was evident; and she had begun so earnestly to desire a change in her present painful position; that, to effect it, she felt willing to endure anything short of total separation from Mr. Grice. She persuaded herself that she should certainly obtain his consent to the projected step, on their next meeting. She must meet him on the morrow afternoon, as she had promised, but resolved to permit no more clandestine interviews. As for the future—well, she had no heart to regard it just now, but was confident that the wisdom and affection of Father Lawrence would ensure the best arrangements which the case would possibly permit.

Thus ran her thoughts, and she gave the assent which the priest awaited.

"That is well. Do, my precious child, keep resolute, and go to Mrs. Thrale as soon as possible. Will you go next week? Very well. I cannot now stay longer with you, but shall see you there. I shall think of you often, be sure. Now, God bless and direct you. Keep firm, and pray faithfully."

She did not see him privately again, as he left the Grange early in the afternoon.

The next morning being Friday, Miss Crossly went early to the Mass which was celebrated on that day at St. Anthony's. Her sister being yet unable to walk, she was accompanied only by little Minny. When the holy sacrifice was over, the few worshippers dispersed to their various occupations, and she also was about to leave, when Mr. Burns came hastily from the little sacristy, and addressed her.

"Miss Crossly, you will do a charity if you will stand sponsor for that child. The young woman has come quite alone."

He pointed to a decent-looking girl, with an infant, whom Teresa had noticed at the end of the church.

The young lady consented, and going to the mother, gently took the sleeping child. They all went into the sacristy for the usual preliminaries. Teresa, from some deeply interested feeling, listened with attention to the answers elicited by Mr. Burns from the young mother,

as she sat, looking delicate and exhausted, before the fire.

"James, son of James and Anna Morgan. Very well. Where were you married?"

"At D— Church, Sir."

"Is your husband a Catholic?" asked the priest, quickly.

"Indeed, Sir, I'm sorry to say he's not."

"Does he know you have brought the child to be baptized?"

The girl wiped her heated face, as she replied, with some hesitation.

"Sure, if he had known, I shouldn't be here now. He would not have that babe christened a Catholic, not if he knew it. I came away while he's at work, Miss," she continued, her confidence engaged by the kind interest expressed on Teresa's face. "I was coming yesterday, but I got weak, and couldn't carry the child all the way, which vexed me, for his grandmother,—that's my husband's mother, Ma'am,—oh, she's a bitter Prodesdant! and she's going to have the babe to her church on Sunday, to have him christened, with a fine noise, or there'll be no peace. But I made up my mind I'd be first. Oh, wouldn't I, my little darling!"

Mr. Burns regarded her gravely.

"Have you been to your duties lately?"

"More's the shame, Father, I haven't. Not these two years—God forgive me!"

"You must come. Don't you know you ought to come before being churched? Now, will you promise I shall see you again soon?"

She promised, but hesitatingly. Mr. Burns took down her address—it was at a village about two miles distant—and the ceremony began.

Seldom of late, had Teresa prayed so earnestly as during the Rite which transferred from the heritage of Darkness to that of Light, the pretty baby which lay so unconscious of that great change, so unable to comprehend what dark influences were ready to assail him, even in his earliest infancy. He lay so quiet, not

crying or struggling during the ceremonials against which infants, in general, so strongly protest, that she liked, with a fond fancy, to work a good omen out of this unusual submissiveness, and prayed that the grace of the sacrament might preserve him, firm in the Faith, through all those prejudices which surrounded his cradle.

The rite is over—the shining soul is now absolved from the curse it was born under,—clothed with grace,—indescribably dear to heaven. Teresa carried it into the sacristy, during the brief ceremony of the mother's churching. The young woman then came to her, and seemed in haste to be gone.

"I brought him in his every-day clothes, Miss, you see," she remarked, while folding a large shawl over the baby's clean but humble gear. "He will have everything fine on Sunday—but nothing worth what he has had this morning! Kiss me, my little jewel: ah, mother can sleep at nights now! I have been so miserable every moment since he came, Miss, thinking he might die before I brought him here. I think I'd a gone wild, if he had."

"But you will be easy now, for he is a little angel," said Miss Crossly, touched by the earnestness of this poor girl, who, though evidently neglectful of her duties, and allied to a Protestant, still clung, with fond fidelity, to her holy faith. "Have you no hopes that your husband will allow him to be openly brought up a Catholic? Perhaps you will persuade him?"

"Oh, ma'am no! He doesn't like our blessed religion, though he married me. But 'tis all through his mother—she's dreadful bitter, indeed! I know she'll keep a sharp eye on the child, but I'll spoil all their teaching. Trust me for that."

Poor girl, she was in earnest; but these were early days, and she was yet untried. Could she hope to be as fresh after years of opposition?

As their path lay together for near a mile, Minny relieved the mother of her burthen, and Teresa talked more with her, and with an increasing interest. She was originally from London, but had long been in the service of the Thrales, whom she had left to be mar-

ried. She had a sister near London, but not a relative, and, excepting that family, not a Catholic acquaintance in the neighbourhood. She pressed Miss Crossly to visit her.

"I'm sure, Miss, it would delight me extremely. I'm so glad you stood for the child. I'd rather it had been yourself than any one whatever."

"You say that, and yet have no idea who I may be," returned Teresa, laughing. "I live at the Grange, up the road here. Yes, I will come in a day or two. You know I must occasionally come, if it is only to see how you bring up baby. I must share in possession of him now—my first little godchild."

She kissed the sleeping infant before the mother received him, and they parted; the woman thanking her with a honest salutation, and a curtsy. She still seemed so weak, that Teresa directed her little companion to assist her a short distance further; and then pursued her homeward way alone, reflecting on the incident of the morning.

She felt—was it a foreshadowing of temptation at hand?—unaccountably depressed. She had been warned often of the probable unhappy results of a mixed marriage, and had considered them in a speculative sort of way; but here they had been, as it were, brought home to her. She had held in her arms the little rosy life which was so heavy a responsibility—so likely to prove a brand of dissension in its family—perhaps to alienate the two whom its natural mission was to unite more closely. She plainly saw how doubtful a prospect of peace lay before the young wife.

"Is it a warning to me? am I blind, and is every one right? Oh, Selwyn, it may be best, it may be best,—"

She did not finish the adjuration, for, at the moment, she turned a bend of the road, and there was a figure which she could never see without trembling limbs, and a pang of indescribable tenderness—there was Selwyn Grice, flushed, moved by a more than usual excitement. He approached hastily, and took her, for a moment, in a caress which she had no power to prevent.

"Teresa, something has happened. I return to London immediately."

"To London!"—

She would have fallen but for his support.

"Yes. At the College I have been insulted—contradicted—I have thrown up my engagement—I had no alternative. I will leave the neighbourhood, and never, never again come near a place where I have been made to suffer so much."

He was in a state of great excitement; but, seeing he had given her too sudden a shock, he softened in a moment—tried to soothe her with tenderness as great.

"To London!"—

She could not realise any other idea.—To that place so distant—that unknown wild. He was going and she—

"I shall die," she gasped, and felt fainting.

How surely that unsophisticated heart opened its depths to him—in return, how he loved her!

"No, my darling, you shall not die, but I shall, if I lose you. Listen—don't refuse me—Become my wife, and go with me. Don't refuse—Teresa, that look kills me."

"Oh, I cannot—I cannot"—she repeated.

He turned pale, and receded from her.

"Then you do not love me—It is a mistake, and I may go."—

"Selwyn, Selwyn, come back! How cruel you are! Oh, what shall I do!"

It is too late, Teresa, to ask that question. You should have asked it long ago, when you first found it expedient to deceive those loved ones whom it never had been necessary to deceive before—when a frank self-examination would have enabled you to do that which you cannot do now—stifle the indiscreet affection which triumphs over your heart.

It need not be told by what further representations and prayers Selwyn gained his point. Enough to say, that, unable to bear the only alternative, she consented to be privately married, and then accompany him to London.

She was to meet him early next morning, and they would proceed to the Church of D——. (Have you not lately visited the Surrogate, Mr. Grice?)

Before they parted, he had so effectually used his influence over her mind, that he had induced her to hope everything for the future. He repeated promises which, doubtless at the time, he intended to keep, and which she firmly believed. He did not intend her, he said, to abandon her dear friends, though she now so abruptly left them, for a few days; but, when he had made some literary arrangements in London, they would return north, and settle in the neighbourhood of the Grange.

"I can study here as well as elsewhere. You shall, my beloved wife, come back in honour; and it shall be my pride and duty to remove the prejudices of your family, (whose opposition I forgive, because their intentions are good,) and to prove to them how happy can be your life with me, in spite of their fears."

The approaching figure of little Minny terminated this eventful interview. He disappeared, after wringing from her a vow of fidelity; and she went home like one in a dream.

In a dream she felt all day. Nothing in her appearance excited attention. None observed her frequent silence, her inability to meet frank familiar eyes, her watchfulness to perform little tender offices, each one with so lingering a caress. Neither her mother nor sister suspected that her good-night salutation was also a farewell.

"But only for a few days,"—she murmured, and sighed, thinking that when those dear faces next regarded her, they would know what a traitress she had been.

Secured in her chamber, she made a few preparations for the morrow's early departure, and then sat down to look round the little room, which she had occupied during all her innocent life.

There was the altar before which she had prayed so often—there the meek Face above. A sudden impulse seized her. She had heard of souls who, on the brink

of fearful danger, had addressed themselves to the Mother of all, and been saved. She had lately read of one, who, even when flying from a safe and holy retreat, had cast herself on that benignant protection, and, after years of sinful wandering, had been brought Home. Unaccountably moved by these thoughts, Teresa rose, and fell on her knees——

“Thou art my Mother—protect my life.”

She said no other prayer, but hurried to her pillow, though not to sleep, but by fitful intervals, and after many broken exclamations.

“Oh, how false I am! Oh, how different is this from what I had always fancied would be the eve of my wedding-day! I thought my bridal clothes would be spread about, so white and joyful; that Mary would steal in to kiss me; that mamma would come to bless me. Where are you, Mary? Mother, mother, where is your blessing?”

Then came the adjuration, so often wrung in anguish of fear from hearts which have abandoned everything to cling to the one frail anchor of human fidelity:

“Selwyn, if after all, you deceive me, what shall I do? What shall I do?”

In the starlight of the morning, Teresa left her home, and a little later was married to Selwyn Grice in D—— Church. They immediately left for London.

The same morning, Mr. Crossly received a note, containing a few, well-expressed sentences from Mr. Grice, and a copy of the marriage certificate. Also, a trembling line——

“Forgive your ever affectionate Teresa.”

CHAPTER IV.

IN LONDON.

A rainy afternoon in London,—slippery streets, battling umbrellas, noise, bustle, and rudeness.

A ladylike girl is crossing from the busy thoroughfare into a quieter street. She steps quickly, with the nervousness of one not accustomed to the surrounding traffic, and, as she gains the parapet, her umbrella happens to come, with a little violence, against a gentleman who is passing. The apology which she pauses to offer is lost in a cry.

“Bernard!”

“Teresa! is it *you*?”

Hardly refraining from a salute in the street, he holds her hand, and looks in the familiar face, while she, agitated betwixt laughter and tears, explains that she lives in London now—and not far off.

“Where is your grandfather? Where is—Mary?” he asks, with a painful flush at the name.

“Oh, they are not here; they are at home. I am married now. Dear Bernard, you are quite in a whirl—pray come home with me, and let me tell you all about it. Dear Bernard, how delighted I am to see you!”

He folded her arm in his, and, as they walked, her tongue ran quickly on to tell him that she had been in London nearly a year and a half, had often hoped to meet him, had been unable to obtain his address from those at the Grange.

“No,” he said, falteringly. “I have not corresponded with them for some time. I—oh, where is the use? But how did you leave them all, Teresa? Have you heard lately?”

It was her turn to look somewhat confused.

“I—correspond with Mary, and sometimes with

Mamma—but—there is something to be explained,—my marriage displeased grandpapa. By-and-bye, I will tell you all about it. Yes, they were well when Mary last wrote."

"Do you live here?" he asked, as they turned into a hushed street of sombre respectability.

"Yes, we have apartments here, for the present.—We intend to remove into the country, soon. My husband found it necessary to be in town, just at first. You are thinking it is dull? I thought so too, but not now—oh, not now. I am quite happy, Bernard;—wait a minute."

She knocked at one of the houses, and tripped in, with a whispered question to the tidy maid who had opened the door.

"Yes, Ma'am, as good as gold!" was the reply.

"Come, Bernard, walk up," said Teresa, looking round to smile, as she lightly preceded him up stairs, and into a gloomy but well-furnished room, on the first floor. Going up to a bower in a corner, she hung over it for a moment.

"Look at my sun-beam," she said, with bashful face suddenly aglow; and turning down the pink blanket, showed him an infant, fair and placid, with large eyes open, and meditatively looking into vacancy.

Bernard changed colour.

"It is the little image of Mary!" he said, and extended his arms. "Give her to me!"

She gave him the soft little bundle of muslin and blue ribbons, looking at him with a depth of earnest meaning as she did so. He kissed the mother's cheek, and walked silently away. From the inner room, whither she had retired to remove her out-door apparel, she watched him pacing up and down, with his handsome head bent, and the infant held against his face. Presently he came, with moistened eyes, to sit by the fire, but still retained the baby, and would not relinquish her during the whole of his stay.

"Of course, Teresa, you have given her *one* name."

A slight shade of trouble was on the young wife's face, as she replied—

"Mary is her second name—she is christened Anna. My husband has a friend of that name, whom he wished to compliment. Of course, Bernard, you will stay and see him, though I don't expect him home before night. He happens to have gone, to-day, to his publisher. He will be truly pleased to see you, and has often, at my request, endeavoured to discover your address, for we knew you were in London, though no more than that. Now as I have found you, we must never again be strangers, Bernard."

He answered affectionately, and the next hour was passed in conversation characterised by the kindness and familiarity of their early days. She talked to him of the Grange and its inmates; then gave him a few particulars of her courtship, and married life. She was evidently proud of her husband, and spoke of the high esteem in which his talents were generally held;—but she remembered afterwards that, in the hurry and familiarity of the conversation, she had always alluded to him by his peculiar Christian name, and by that only.

"You will see, Bernard, that he will command a good position before long, although we have not begun with a very brilliant appearance. We had intended to live near home, but, on reflection, thought we had better wait a little while, for he has had some disappointments in his literary undertakings; and, besides, grandpapa is vexed, at present. Selwyn has been lately engaged over a work which he wishes to publish immediately. He has gone now to the publisher about it. I hope he will be successful, for he has taken extraordinary pains with it." So she chatted on.

"But, Teresa,—I need not apologise for the question—have you no other source of income? is it possible that you are dependant on the labour of his brain? Bless my soul!" said the young possessor of some thousands a year, looking deeply concerned.

She laughed.

"You are an idle man, Bernard, and therefore shocked at work. Yes, we have no income from any other source; yet we are doing very well—for beginners, you know,—and I am hopeful, and altogether as happy

as I can reasonably expect to be. It is true I have had some little trials," she continued, softly. "It was a trial to live here, after the Grange. I thought I should never be reconciled to the narrow, gloomy place, and the crowded streets. I used to be terrified if I stirred a yard from the door without the maid.—But I soon had something to occupy my thoughts, and convert me into a steady matron."

The young man looked admiringly at her, thinking her a model of youthful matrons, as she sat with modest face, clear gentle eyes, and blooming figure neatly garbed. Motherhood sat well upon her, and had given her a development and composed assurance of presence which she had always wanted. He liked to hear her soft, well-remembered voice, and listened with great interest to all she told him. But, though he encouraged her to converse of her affairs, he was closely reserved about his own, and eluded every effort by which she tried to open a way to his confidence on that point. After displaying a little kind solicitude, she instinctively felt it best to drop the subject, and watched him, with tears starting to her eyes. She thought him sadly changed. A handsomer face and figure it would have been hard to find, but his once ruddy beauty was exchanged for a haggard delicacy, an unquiet, anxious look, which told of mind and frame alike ill at ease. He seemed most like himself of old, when he spoke of Mary, which he did without reserve, though always with a rising colour, and a steady light in his large blue eyes.

"I do not deserve her, Teresa, and never did; but I love her with all my unworthy heart. For her sake, I shall be unmarried all my days. She sometimes thinks of me—yes, she does. If ever I should hear she has married another, I shall put a pistol to my head that hour."

He bent that head, rich with heavy, glossy curls, beneath Teresa's grave regard; but, when she ventured on an admonition, wrung from her by his momentarily desperate glance, he looked up with a boyish laugh, and called her a sedate little preacher. Did she imagine—

Here the maid entered with a letter, which she placed on the table near, saying,

"For master, ma'am."

It was a large missive, directed legibly. Bernard's eyes happened to rest upon it; instantaneously, the smile lingering on his face gave way to a blank gaze, and then to a startling pallor. He sat for a moment, like one stupefied, and then rose, with a gasping sound.

"Bernard—what is it? Oh pray, speak!"

"What—what does it mean? Who is your husband?" he asked hoarsely.

"Mr. Grice is my husband—Selwyn Grice."

He glared at her, as if taking in with difficulty the full meaning of her words, and then sank into his chair, looking very faint. She was going to the bell, hardly knowing what she did, when he caught her hand, and so detained her, until the whiteness left his countenance, and he could speak.

"Don't be shocked, Teresa. It is a seizure I am subject to. What did I say? Forget it, for it was nonsense. I must go into the air. Nothing but a breath of air relieves me. Do not be alarmed."

"Oh, Bernard, how can I help it?" she said, following him to the door. "Will you not come back? However, I have your address, you know. Selwyn shall call on you in the morning. I shall be so uneasy about you."

He muttered something inaudible, and signing for her to remain, made his way down stairs, and into the street.

While she, pondering sadly over him, prepares her child for its rest, we may take a hasty retrospective view of her married life.

Has everything gone well with her? She has said that she is as happy as she can reasonably expect to be; by which she perhaps intimates that certain illusions cherished in the romance of her brief wooing had, by this time, been dispelled. Naturally so: every girl of sense will be prepared to find that marriage is not courtship, but still, foolish Love *will* dream in those golden days which come before the wedding,

and, as a shock would injure him, it is well to waken him gently from his lingering slumbers. It is proof of particular amiability and good sense that Teresa had soon and meekly learned certain lessons for which she had been all unprepared, and which, indeed, she had not conned without tears. In the early days of her wife-hood there had been hours when she had felt isolated from society, and cruelly estranged from friends; when the great dull houses opposite seemed to shut her in from every breath of air—(oh, how different from the free breezes blowing round her home!)—when she could not rest her aching heart on her husband's sympathy, for he was busy, or just going out, or, worse, sometimes rough under the influence of an irritation which she could have easily forgiven, had it not been caused by some trifle too contemptible, she thought, to deserve the notice of a mind like his.

She soon found it wiser to school herself to the practice of an amiable sort of dissimulation, and, truly attached to her husband, truly desirous of retaining his love, to begin, sweetly as woman can, that patient courtship by which she often repays, with life-long interest, the brief, ardent wooing which has won her. In this course she was helped by a resolution which lay hidden in her innocent heart; a resolution to enforce Selwyn's admiration of her holy religion by proving how efficacious and how strong can be its practical effects even in the familiar trials of daily existence. "If I live as a Catholic should, it is the best way to make him love my faith:" so she had whispered to herself, on finding he still deferred the great inquiry which he had promised to undertake. Strengthened by this hope more than she knew, religious, mild, and dutiful, had hitherto been her married life; and to its score may be attributed many a contradiction borne with sweetness, many a disappointment smiled away, on occasions when merely natural amiability would, very likely, have failed her. By-and-bye, there came yet another source of strength—a new solicitude, gently increasing, tenderly imperative,—a new hope, which casts upon her future a dearer light than it could possibly

have known before. The expectant mother never again is lonely; and fancy fills her arms, before the time, with a little, clinging form which, if a girl, shall be called "Mary," shall wear, through childhood, that royal Lady's colour, and learn to recognise a pictured Face of mild and holy beauty almost as soon as the features of her earthly mother.

Of her husband's antecedents and family connexions Teresa had, as yet, learned very little. He had told her that he had spent most of his youth in America, whither he remembered having been taken in early boyhood by a gentleman whom he called his "guardian," and whom he had lost in a frightful shipwreck, when near the end of the voyage; that he had afterwards been adopted and liberally educated by a Mr. Grice, a near relative of the gentleman just referred to, and that at his own pressing wish, he had come to seek, in England, the fame and fortune which his talents seemed likely to command. He had few personal friends, no living relations, so far as he knew—a peculiar isolation which excited Teresa's wonder, and often caused her to suspect that some secret of injustice, or of shame, lurked in the mystery which evidently shaded his earlier life. In this surmise he seemed to share; but to him the subject was now of worn-out interest, and whenever it had drawn him into conversation, he would conclude by telling his wife not to trouble herself with further conjectures, and add that she had chosen a man who would make his own way upwards, without thanks to friends or kindred.

Teresa had just put her child to sleep, when she heard her husband's step upon the stairs, and immediately rose to greet him with the ready look of welcome. He came in tired, wet, and disappointed, for he had failed to make satisfactory arrangements with the publisher, respecting his lately finished work. Refraining from any remarks at first, she busied herself with little kind attentions, ordered in the hot supper which he liked; and then, sitting near while he partook of the repast, she related her meeting and conversation with Bernard

Massinger. He listened with interest, and seemed to share in her pleasure at the occurrence.

"Yes, certainly, I will call upon him," he said, when she had concluded. "Give me the exact address to-morrow, my dear, and I will call on my way to Bowes. I must see if I can do business with *him*, now as that shabby T—— won't suit me. I tell you what, Teresa: I wish that young Massinger would patronise my book. He could print it by a stroke of his pen, and small credit to him! A fine thing that a young fellow like that should be making drakes of his thousands, while a poor devil is kept in the back-ground, after hard work, for want of a few pounds to spare!"

"Indeed, pray mention it to him. He would think it an honour to help you, and so he ought," said she, earnestly; and her eye then falling on the letter which had arrived that evening, she gave it to her husband.

He opened it, with a careless air, which soon changed as he read. The writer was a gentleman who possessed great influence in the literary world; and wrote to explain that he was meditating the publication of a series of original works, and hoped to secure the most esteemed services of Mr. Grice. The labour imposed would be great, but the remuneration proffered was very handsome; could they talk over it together? *et cetera*. Selwyn was elated, and immediately saw himself on the high road to wealth and distinction.

"It is the very thing I wanted; the very thing to suit me! See if from here," tapping his expansive forehead, "does not come something to make them all stare. We shall be rich, my love, rich as I promised thee."

He put forth his manly arm, and drew her to him.

"Dost think I am going to let thee remain hidden under a cloud, my bright treasure? Poor little hand! Let me look at it—getting quite lined and rough, with scouring that little mortal every day! But she shall have a maid to herself, and you shall have half-a-dozen, as you deserve, my patient darling."

Teresa laughed gleefully, pleased at the prospect—more pleased by his tenderness. They were happy

that evening, while building many fine castles for the future, and making many neat arrangements for the immediate present.

"I shall not be able to pursue that course of writing here," remarked Selwyn. "This air oppresses me—dulls my faculties. We must remove."

"O Selwyn, I wish we could go within sight of green fields, where you could walk whenever your head is tired, and I could send baby out, without need to fear the crowded streets."

"We will, love. There are many pretty healthy spots in the environs of the town, and, as houses are cheap there, we will rent one. It must needs be but a small place for the present, and plainly furnished, for my stock of ready money is getting low; but if you will excuse a humble dwelling, a few months shall see you in one more fit for you."

At which remark she laughed again, and simply said that she could be happy anywhere, anywhere, with him and baby.

Their expectations did not seem likely to prove fallacious; for when Selwyn next morning had an interview with Mr. S——, matters were satisfactorily arranged, and he came home in high spirits, and with a pile of costly books of reference for his laborious work, which he was immediately to commence. On his way he had called at Bernard's address, but learned from the footman that Mr. Massinger had left town early that morning; had gone to Malvern for his health.

"Without leaving a message or a note," said Mr. Grice, to his wife. "He might have had that much grace, I think. Do you know, my dear, I have a notion that your kinsman is a little cracked."

CHAPTER V.

RISING.

In one of the northern environs of London, where brick and mortar had begun to be busy, but had not yet destroyed the rural look of the neighbourhood, in a small, new row, facing some fresh fields, Mr. Grice found a house which he approved. When he took Teresa to see it, she laughed in amusement at its few, box-like rooms, at its short passage, and marvellously narrow stairs; but the little home looked bright and new, and, when her husband lamented the necessity of putting her there, she replied that she should be as gay as the princess in the Enchanted Cell. He understood well enough what sort of enchantment sufficed to make her happy, and, as he kissed the amiable affectionate creature he had won, it may be that the manliness of his better nature supplied him with certain good resolves for the future, and, perhaps, a few reproaches for the past. One thing, however, occasioned Teresa some uneasiness, and she timidly asked—

“Are we far from a chapel, Selwyn?”

Of course, he had not given that point any consideration, and answered dubiously—

“Well, no.—Let me see—Somer’s Town is the nearest—yes. It is between two and three miles—but you can take a coach, my dear; and, besides, you need not attend every Sabbath, I suppose,” added he, no church-goer himself, and ignorant of a Catholic’s obligation on that head.

Teresa soon found that, notwithstanding her good will, she was not able to hear Mass every Sunday; she could not always leave her child to the care of their only servant, did not always like to put her husband to the expense of a coach; for Mr. Grice, despite his fine mind and acquirements, stooped to an interference

which a man can never maintain without involving himself in a host of littlenesses, and inevitably losing the respect of his household; he had assumed the close direction of domestic affairs, and held every shilling of the funds. Under these difficulties she gradually fell into the custom of attending divine service every alternate Sunday—then, not quite so often; but not before she had borne many an inconvenience in the effort to fulfil her weekly obligation, and had many a walk alone to the district chapel, through the glaring, heated streets.

Notwithstanding these, and other drawbacks, the days glided on in contentment, and Teresa always remembered with pleasure that early part of her married life. The baby, Anna, bloomed in health and beauty; Selwyn was kind, and worked successfully and hard—too hard, Teresa thought; and often softly entering the little study where he sat, with intellectual head bent abstractedly over some yellow page of strange dialect, she would coax him away to some dainty meal, or to walk in the breezy and crowslipped fields. His labour soon received a fresh stimulus; returning one day from a visit to his employer, he remarked to his wife—

“I must work harder than ever. S. tells me that his undertaking has got wind, and that we shall meet with opposition. A work on the very subject I am engaged on, is already largely advertised to appear in May. We have found out the writer, young Barrott; I have heard of him before, and know him to be something of a scholar, and a rapid writer. He has the advantage of excellent materials to work with, and is confident. *We* must try to gain the field first; so now, my dear, you will see a race.”

To work, accordingly, the two writers went, with tortured heads and driving pens, in a hand-to-hand struggle for name and bread; while Teresa, nothing doubtful of the result, would often heave a sigh of pity for the unseen youth who, she thought, was doomed to waste his strength in vain competition with her husband's great and practised abilities.

In the house immediately adjacent, resided a gentle-

woman whom Teresa regarded with particular interest. Whether it was that the kind old face reminded her of her own distant mother, or that she was touched by the loneliness of the drooping figure, she seldom saw Mrs. Collins in the little garden, without going out to exchange a few friendly words; and soon was invited through the gate which separated each small enclosure, and into the neat parlour beyond. During the spring evenings, when Selwyn was so busy, she fell into the habit of taking her needlework and little Anna, who was a favourite with the old lady, and of passing an hour in society which she found to be agreeable, and even refined. Mrs. Collins, who had once occupied a very good position, would amuse her with anecdotes of real occurrence which were astonishing to her simple mind; and, when more intimate, with some passages out of her own life, which had been sad and tried. She had been married when very young, and on being left a widow, with one son, had married again. That second union was an unfortunate affair, for she had trusted a rascal, who had deceived her by some legal irregularity, and soon deserted her. She did not often advert to him, but dwelt fondly upon the name of her son, whom she seemed to admire and love with unbounded tenderness.

“He is obliged to live in town, to be near the libraries, but every Sunday of his life he spends with me, no matter what happens. He is following the literary profession, which he prefers to any other, and he is likely to adorn it, every one says, for he has talent, my dear, and I strove to give him a good education. I had a little money, and I gladly gave it for that object; though it has obliged me to live in this quiet way. Ah, my boy will be finding me a grander home some day, if God preserves him!”

Although Selwyn worked hard in order to get the start of the rival publication which was about to appear, the other author was in print first, and achieved a very fair success. Honourable criticism and good sale followed the publication for a fortnight, but for that time only: after that brief interval, Selwyn's work appeared, and the

other immediately fell flat, without a hope of revival. Who, indeed, could compete with research so extensive, with style so masterly, as that which the elder writer had brought to his task? His book was eagerly received—laudatory notices were general—the sale was rapid, the triumph complete, the author's name permanently established.

"I wonder how that poor young man takes his disappointment," Teresa said, while watching her husband cut out, for preservation, paragraph after paragraph of favourable critiques in various journals. "I think, Selwyn, you might afford him a little pity."

"Bah!" he returned—the close rivalry of clever men is rarely generous. "I wonder if he would have pitied me, had I been knocked under. He is a vain fellow, and I hope the lesson he has had will do him good."

Here Teresa, looking meditatively out of the window, her kind thoughts still clinging to the subject, observed the young maid next door giving over the palings a small parcel, which Norah brought into the house. It contained a few books lent by Teresa, from time to time, to beguile the lonely hours of her neighbour.

"Mrs. Collins says she is much obliged to you, ma'am, but she thinks you had better have them back, for her son, Mr. Philip, is coming home ill, and she'll be busy nursing him."

A day or two after this, Selwyn bade his wife write to their landlord and give notice, according to agreement, that they should quit the house in a month. "We must leave the poky little place," he added, "and get into a house which a gentleman need not be ashamed to enter. But I think we will first go to some watering-place. I want your pretty roses to come back, my love; they have gone lately."

"Am I pale? Perhaps it is through having been rather anxious about you, love. Besides, baby has kept me awake, lately. She has not been well, and I was fearful of her least movement breaking your rest."

"What ails the little wench? She looks well enough," said the father, glancing, though carelessly, at the cradle. It had been one of Teresa's earliest trials

to discover that he did not like children. "Ah! it will be different with *mine*," she had whispered; but time had not fulfilled that natural hope.

Before she could answer his last remark, they saw the young girl from next door run, with pale face, and flying cap, past the window, and, after saying a few words to Norah on their doorstep, hurry up the street. Norah came in to them, in good-hearted dismay—

"Oh please, Sir, such a sad thing's happened to Mr. Philip. He's broke a blood-vessel, ma'am, and Mrs. Collins says *will* you go in, till the doctor come."

Charging his wife to remain at home, Selwyn instantly went. In a few moments, Teresa saw two gentlemen, whom she knew to be surgeons in the neighbourhood, enter the house next door, and then her husband came out hastily, with a blanched and horrified face. As he re-entered the parlour, he cast off his shoes.—She shuddered to see they were wet.

"Never let me see them again!" he said, hoarsely, made an effort to remove his coat, but suddenly fell back on the sofa, in a strong fainting fit.

The swoon was brief, for while Teresa held his head, and called, in agitation, for a dozen feminine remedies, vigorous-handed Norah rushed in, with an Irish howl, and a bucket, and so effectually sluiced her master, that he started to consciousness with a deep sigh, struggled up, and could soon assure his wife that it was nothing—only the effect of a shock.

"It was such a sickening scene," he added, with his cheek blanching again. "There—forget it; and let me forget it too."

But it is to be hoped that he did not forget it, nor the lesson taught by that awful prostrate figure, and that moaning mother. Until months afterwards, he did not tell Teresa he had learned, from the broken exclamations of poor, frantic Mrs. Collins (herself ignorant of all the facts) that her son, accustomed to write under a *nomme-de-plume*, was his late rival, and that he had not broken a bloodvessel, as she had at first supposed, but, weary of life, smarting under defeat, had deliber-

ately opened a vein, and bled to unconsciousness and almost to death before his rash act was interrupted by her accidental entrance.

The unhappy young man died during the following night. Next day, Mr. Grice removed, with his family, from the neighbourhood. He told Teresa that he required immediate change of air; but perhaps he more truly might have said that he did not find it easy to remain where only a thin partition divided him from the hushed room, and that within, whose tragical end he had unintentionally occasioned. The impression made upon him by this sad event was, for some time, very deep; and was shared by Mr. S—— and his son, to whom Selwyn told the affair in confidence. The gentlemen subscribed a handsome sum, which they sent anonymously to the bereaved mother, and which, may be, procured her sufficient comforts during her last illness, and a decent grave. She died within a month afterwards.

CHAPTER VI.

REVERSES.

When we next meet Teresa, she is the mistress of a handsome home. The family is settled in the vicinity of the City of B——, to which Mr. Grice had been attracted by several considerations, chief of which may be mentioned the cordial esteem evinced for him by the Dean, and other magnates of the neighbourhood, and the advantage of unlimited access to the magnificent Chapter library. It is true that, remembering a promise once made, he, with some parade of generosity, had offered Teresa the choice of returning North, in order to settle near her old home; but she had thought it wise to leave the decision entirely to him. That dream of returning to live near the old Grange had once been dear to her fancy, but now she could bear to feel that

her home intercourse had better be restricted to an affectionate correspondence with her mother and Mary ; and therefore when her husband selected a residence, named "The Beeches," about seven miles from the city above-mentioned, she dutifully approved his choice. Thither, on leaving London, they went, and commenced housekeeping on a scale rather opposed to her ideas of prudence, but which he asserted was justified by his prospects. The house was well furnished at great cost ; Teresa had to engage a small staff of servants at once ; and Selwyn, having thought it expedient to place seven miles between him and the town, in order that his studies might be the least liable to interruption from visitors, soon found a phaeton as great a necessity as anything.

The changing seasons come and go, and seven years pass away. That was an honourable time of Selwyn's life. He had made a name highly regarded by many, was courted by all circles in his immediate neighbourhood, and in friendly correspondence with some of the most eminent literary characters in the land. But it was whispered, that the respect felt for him abroad was sure to diminish when you approached his home ; and certain reports were current round The Beeches, which occasioned his friends to advance on his behalf the convenient excuse of "eccentricity;" but his oft-discharged servants visited him with a harder charge, while they wondered, with many an expressive shrug, "how Missus there could be happy."

Was she happy? Well, Life, in every position, has its portions of sweet and bitter, and blest is the temper which cheerfully numbers its consolations rather than its crosses. Teresa had comforts which she would not have exchanged for a lot of invariable peace. Come into the nursery, and you will see whither the mother's heart went under every contradiction, and where she could surely find gaiety, innocence, tumultuous, fond caresses. There we find Anna, with soft brow and smile ; the twin brothers who came next, and two or three radiant little faces, unknown to us, but dearly familiar to their mother's eye.

They are all bright, healthy children, with fine dispositions, which she is solicitous to train well from their early infancy. No matter what changes were instituted among the other domestics, she always kept a Catholic maid in the nursery; and there sitting, at regular hours, among the little group, she would try, with catechism and sweet tales of saints, to fix impressions which, she hoped, might be ineffaceable during the length of their yet untried lives. Poor mother! to those exertions she had a stimulus, secret, but ever newly invigorating,—her illnesses were frequent:—if, in one of these perils, she were to die, what tutelage might not succeed to her own? This thought, full of inevitable bitterness to the Catholic parent allied to one not of the Faith, was with her night and day, and often sent her, with yearning solicitude, to the little innocents who were so unconscious of their danger, so unable to comprehend half of the pious lessons which she anxiously tried to root in their childish minds.

For a little time after we renew our acquaintance with the family, things went on as usual; then came a change. Selwyn made one of those false steps which sometimes mar the most flourishing prospects, and can seldom be recovered in the course of a lifetime.

He had, for some months past, been inclined to make the most of any inconveniences belonging to their present dwelling, complaining that it was too small for the increasing family, that he was disturbed by the cackle of the servants, and the noise of the children; though seldom did a housemaid loiter in the precincts of his study, or the ring of childish voices sound, from the distant nurseries, through the hushed house. Had he frankly examined those deep recesses of the mind where lurks that weakness which can easily fool the strong, he might have discovered the real spring of this discontent. The truth is, success and the laudations he was now accustomed to receive, were developing a characteristic which had lain dormant during his less brilliant career—that petty pride, common to many clever or prosperous men, which urges them to top the social circle in which they stand, or be continually dis-

satisfied. A comfortable home,—a good position honourably earned, were advantages no longer appreciated by Selwyn.—Why? Because he had cast envious eyes on a stately mansion, lately vacant, as occupant of which he might, with undisputed sway, “lord it” over his neighbours for wide miles around: and until he had attained the object of that ambition, he was secretly restless, daily wounded through one or another of those apertures by which human vanity is so easily accessible, and so keenly pricked.

At length he unfolded his wishes, or rather his purpose, to Teresa, who, being naturally taken by surprise, and apprehensive of the additional expenses which would necessarily follow the tenancy of so noble a residence, was inclined to question the prudence of the step. Little, however, were remonstrances likely to deter her husband from a project once formed; and he had besides, so happy a skill in throwing the hues of his sanguine fancy over the most uncertain prospect, that he not only persuaded himself his intended measure was highly reasonable and necessary, but finally brought her to think so too, and to anticipate, with a feeling foreign to her heart—a little flutter of gratified vanity—the distinction of being mistress over an establishment so fine.

Accordingly, to Burnside Towers they presently removed in due style,—which means, that the neighbourhood had been made lively by tradespeople passing to and fro, that the neat phaeton had been superseded by a handsome carriage, with two fine steeds, and that when the master and mistress alighted to enter their new abode, they were received, in the hall, by a longer row of obsequious, smiling domestics than Teresa, for the moment, could number. Poor thing, she looked just then, but a wan and quiet mistress, for, as she crossed the grand entrance, a very pressing thought was in her mind, and its effect was to humiliate rather than to flatter. “All this to be provided by your poor head, my dear;—ought we to do it?” Such was her silent query, but it was late to retreat, and, glancing at his manly satisfied face, she

did what she had always done—implicitly relied upon him.

Scarcely were they settled at the "Towers" than a new expense was found necessary. They must inaugurate their tenancy by giving a dinner-party, and Selwyn promised himself that he would then resume his literary labours with ardour and comfort.

Ah, that deceiving "*then!*" It brought something he was far from expecting—a sudden and grievous blow.

On the evening of the party, Teresa had just finished her rich toilette when her husband entered the dressing-room. He looked so disturbed that she quietly dismissed the maid, and, when he had followed, with suspicious ear, the girl's retreating steps, begged him to say at once what had happened—something more than a chance accident she augured from that gloomy countenance. He did not keep her long in suspense, but, hastily pacing up and down, replied—

"I have just got a letter from London, containing very bad news, shocking news. S— is dead—died suddenly two days ago."

She exclaimed at the tidings; and then asked—

"Will it affect your prospects, Selwyn?"

"Of course it will; materially. I am half-ruined—half ruined."

Teresa looked at him, with a miserable remembrance of their position. They were largely in debt through their late removal, none of the new furniture being yet paid for, and a heap of liabilities on their shoulders. She thought of the little faces in the cribs upstairs, and wrung her hands.

"Now, Teresa, don't behave like a silly woman and waste time. I tell you what you must do. Come into the library, and write notes as fast as you can to all those people we expect. I can't see one of them: tell them so. I am ill—feverish. I shall go to bed."

She placed herself between him and the door, as he was fairly going.

"Selwyn, I entreat you, consider for a moment—only a moment, my dear. There is not time to write—they

will be here directly. Pray let us make an effort to hide it all, since no one yet knows, and since everything is already prepared. If you give way like this, the affair will get wind in a few hours, and the tradespeople be upon us before we have made any arrangements."

She scarcely knew what she was saying, yet, with feminine quickness, had seized upon the right points for argument, which she urged until she had dissuaded him from his first intention, and seen him go to his room, to prepare for the expected guests.

The party went off as though no cloud had descended upon the mansion. Quiet anguish lay at Teresa's heart and kept her very pale, notwithstanding her successful attempts to be an agreeable hostess; but Selwyn seemed to have made a resolution to forget everything outside the present scene, took a great deal of wine, and was brilliant and entertaining even beyond his wont. At length, the exertion was over; the last of the guests departed, and silence fell upon the disordered rooms. Teresa would have been thankful not to go to bed at all, but to relieve her full heart by conversation on the subject which oppressed it; but seeing her husband, when he had, with smiling courtesy, dismissed the last group, immediately subside into silence, with a heavy weary expression, she refrained from speaking; and the unhappy couple went to take what rest they could.

Next morning, Selwyn, though quiet and depressed, was very affectionate to his wife, for whose behaviour during that trying evening he was now truly grateful. They had a long conversation together, and he explained the state of his affairs with a degree of confidence he had never yet given her. She then saw plainly, as she had before suspected, that he had been too sanguine in every expectation, and that in lately augmenting their household expenses, he had done a very imprudent and unfortunate thing. The death of Mr. S— was likely to put an end to his most lucrative engagements. Occasional employment he had from other quarters, but insufficient to maintain his growing family in comfort; and, besides, of late he had

neglected every other connexion for the superior advantages offered by his late friend.

"In that you acted for the best, my dear," said Teresa, "and therefore need not blame yourself. But do you think all employment will be cut off in consequence of Mr. S—'s death? What more likely than that his undertakings may be still carried on by his son?"

"Ah, I don't think so. S—, poor fellow! had just completed his project, and was sanguine over another thing, which would have been very successful, I'm sure, but must go to the wall now, I suppose. However, I mean to have some correspondence with young S— about it, though I have not much hope that he inherits his father's spirit or talent. But something I am in hopes about:—I have on hand an elaborate article, which should have been finished last quarter. I'll get it done, and send it to the Review immediately. I expect a certain sum for it, and, what is better, I shall be in favour there again: I've neglected them lately. Poor S— owes me a matter of £30 yet, and that is a help, though trifling. Oh, perhaps we shall pull through after all! Now, my dear, we must keep everything quiet for the present. Have a cheerful face whenever you are looked at, and I'll set to work at once."

He shut himself in his study, and worked night and day; while Teresa, in her fine new home, awaited results with a heavy heart.

Selwyn's correspondence with young Mr. S— was far from having a satisfactory conclusion; that gentleman writing, with some coldness, to say that he did not enter into Mr. Grice's views—could not promise him, at present, any permanent employment. Of other neglected friends whom he now wished to conciliate, one was abroad; another had retired from the influential position he had formerly held, and his successor, as it happened, was a gentleman with whom Mr. Grice had long been at open warfare in the arena of literature. To add to his disappointments, the MSS., from which he had expected much, was returned to him with a very polite note—it was too elaborate, too learned—if Mr.

Grice would look over, and simplify it, they should be most happy to see it again.

The scholar had no heart for the task, and sat over the rejected pages, head on hand, until Teresa came in, anxious to learn what news the post had brought. He looked up, and drawing her kindly to him, said that his last hopes were defeated, that he could not maintain their present establishment a week longer—it was clear they must leave the neighbourhood, and, by a sale of the furniture, pay most of their lately contracted debts. Teresa, with head on his shoulder, answered with such words of courage and affection as flow readily from a worthy woman's heart in time of trial. She could be happy anywhere with the children—and him. Let them immediately quit that unfortunate place, and seek a humble retreat: he must not despond, for they had had a lesson which would benefit them all their lives, and they should look back on that present trouble from days which would be bright, however reduced their lot, if only they resolved to keep free from debt, and to live in peace together. So she went on, speaking from a heart which had been closed, but was now re-opening with the old gush of love, until Selwyn, with moist eyes, declared that he should always be rich enough while he had her, and could look upon the future with more calm courage than had seemed possible to him an hour before.

The pair talked long together. At the close of their conversation, it was given out among the servants that their master was going on business to Liverpool, and, on the following day, he left the Towers, with trunk duly labelled for the journey north. But a day or two afterwards, Teresa received a letter, with post mark, London, containing these lines—

“My dear wife, I arrived here last night, and can now breathe more freely. Wimpole will be with you in the course of the week, and you must leave everything to him. I will write by him full instructions about yourself and the children. Meanwhile, keep things quiet.”

When that period of trouble was past, Teresa used to

look back upon it as on a broken dream, and remember how a little man in black, with shrewd face and respectful manners, appeared at the great gates one morning, and assumed the reins of government directly he had sidled into the house; how she got, from her husband, the instructions promised, and sat crying over them; how the servants, (unluckily beginning to suspect the impending crisis,) gathered together in a small whirlpool of excitement, with demonstrations sympathetic, scornful, or insolent, according to their tempers; how the stalwart coachman, sitting down in the hall, swore loudly, and refused to budge an inch when directed to bring out the carriage for the family to depart; how, at length, with her dear infants and one condoling nurse-maid, she was driven to meet the coach for the nearest seaport, ostensibly to take ship for Liverpool, but really to lie quiet in lodgings already provided by Wimpole, until that active manager should have finished his business at the Towers, and be able to escort herself and young family to London. Truly that was a day of sorrow and mortification to poor Teresa, and the dread of being followed by creditors, notwithstanding the haste and caution of her departure, greatly increased her discomfort. She arrived at the town, however, without any fresh annoyance, and after sending back the girl by the next coach, she despatched to its place of address a note which had been given her by Wimpole, and then anxiously awaited the visitor whom it was to summon.

Towards evening, that person entered the sitting-room of the retired inn where Teresa had taken refuge, and proved to be a comely woman, whose face beamed bright-eyed kindness, as she glanced round on the little family. They looked a weary group. Anna, the eldest, with patience beyond her years, lay upon the tightly stuffed sofa, patting to rest the little curly head of a younger sister, one of the twin brothers was asleep on the rug, the other gravely helped his mother to entertain a lovely baby of a year's growth, who wailed and fought on her tired knee.

"Mrs. Morgan, Ma'am," said the woman's cheery

voice. Teresa had heard its tones before—where? she wondered.

"I'm afeerd I've kept ye waiting long, although I come as quick as I could—'tis a ride of four mile you'll have, Ma'am, afore you're at my place. How tired you look, surely. Give me the baby, Ma'am. Pretty cretur! does it know me, then? And do *you* know me, little master? Pretty lambs! aren't they your comfort, Ma'am, under your trouble? Oh, cheer up, my lady—You'll live to laugh at worse trouble, I hope," said this honest friend, soothingly.

Teresa had burst into tears caused not so much by present trials, as by a recollection which flashed upon her when she saw the woman with the infant in her arms. She then immediately recognized her, and saw, clearly as a thing of yesterday, St. Anthony's little church, the young mother and child, and all that had afterwards occurred on that last day of her unmarried life.

While she tried to check her emotion, the good woman woke up the children, helped to fold them in numerous wraps, and then led the way to a curious covered vehicle, which stood in the court. She apologized for the conveyance, adding—

"But you see, ma'am, the chil'ren are snug here; and it being our own, there's no questions asked. Yes, ma'am, the boxes is in. I'll drive ye gently, though I'm afeerd ye'll be shook."

Whereupon they set off at a trot which soon sent the little ones to sleep again.

Life, certainly, has strange reverses, thought Teresa, jolted in a conveyance so different from the soft-rolling chariot she had long called her own; but she had schooled herself to meet adversity calmly, and would not regard the present inconvenience. What she did regard, with an eye of fear, was the long journey to London; and she silently shed a tear as she went again over her instructions. Selwyn had written that she must stay with the Morgans (who inhabited a retired cottage on the beach, some miles from the town) until Wimpole was ready to accompany her to London—that

she must come round by sea, as she could not then be followed, and, besides, the appointed vessel being owned by a brother of Wimpole who happened to be under some obligations to him, he found that the journey would be comparatively inexpensive: she must make up her mind to bear what could not be avoided, &c. Remembering every word of that hard letter, written in evident haste and impatience, she had difficulty in subduing certain bitter thoughts of her husband; and to divert her mind, she tried to listen to the chat of the communicative Mrs. Morgan.

She soon learned that good creature had inhabited her present abode for the last seven years, her husband having obtained a post among the coast-guard very soon after her marriage; that "Captain" Wimpole was nearly allied to her, being the husband of her only sister.

"Such a careful, kind man he is; he'll see well to you and them dear lambs, never fear. And lor! you needn't mind the voyage, ma'am; 'tis pleasanter nor coaching, by a deal. Why, I go by custom, every year, to see my sister which lives at Gravesend, and those few days on the water I do enjoy beyond a little. The sea is like an old friend to me; don't you never fear it, ma'am. The weather being just right for you, ye'll go very pleasant, without a doubt."

By the time they had reached their resting-place it was too dark for Teresa to discern surrounding objects; but next morning, looking about her with some interest, she perceived that the cottage lay high up the shingly beach, with no other habitation in sight, and the vast sea spread out before it, in changeful beauty. The spot was strangely lonely, but it had the recommendations of health, novelty, and quiet; and, being of that happy temper which makes the best of every situation, she anticipated with content her proposed sojourn there, thankful for an interval of repose after much anxiety, and glad to see her little ones full of enjoyment at a scene so new.

On the day following her arrival, while strolling on the beach, she recollected that a letter from her sister Mary had been given her, yesterday, at the Towers, and

now, drawing it forth, she began the perusal. It commenced by affectionately congratulating the reader on her rising fortunes. (Teresa had written home, under the influence of some natural elation, on the occasion of their removal to Burnside Towers; reading her sister's words, she sat down before the cottage where she had taken refuge, and paused, to muse and sigh.)

"I wish," continued Mary, "I had good news of ourselves to give you, but I am sorry to say I have not. Our dear mother is failing fast; she gets very weak, and suffers much, but with such sweet resignation that it is clear the cross which she has borne so long grows the dearer to her as it grows heavier. Oh Teresa, before long I may have to write, and tell you we have no more a mother. Pray for her, and let those little innocents, whom I lovingly kiss, pray also; she often talks of you and of them."

Of Mr. Crossly the writer spoke at some length.

"I cannot help telling you that a great change has been gradually coming over him. I should fancy he has some serious trouble on his mind, did I see any cause for it, which I do not, for everything is as usual. Dear mamma's decline he has long been expecting, so that cannot be the reason of his continued depression.

* * I informed him, at your desire, of the good news your last contained, and secretly hoped he would show pleasure; but he does not send you any message. Have patience, dear sister; some day, I trust, he will be towards you as he used to be, and do Mr. Grice the justice he deserves." * . *

Teresa, slowly folding her letter, returned to the cottage. Now it happened that, with eyes and cheeks brightened by the fresh sea-winds, she looked, at the moment, remarkably like herself of former days; and it happened, too, that Mrs. Morgan, looking up to smile on her entrance, evidently received some new idea, which gradually shaded that honest face with an expression puzzled and thoughtful, but sufficiently significant. Teresa saw that recognition could not long be avoided, and thinking it best to make a merit of a necessity, she met the woman's eye with a smile.

"You are thinking of something new, Nanny."

"Well, indeed, ma'am, I'm thinking I've seen you before. I'm wond'ring where? but I'm dazed just now."

"Don't you remember the Church near D—, where you took your first baby to be christened, and the god-mother you found there?"

Nanny beamed recognition and delight.

"Lor, miss, is it yourself? Surely so it is the same! Well, now, who'd ha' dreamed I should meet you here! And so often as I've thought of you and wondered should I ever see you again. I asked at your home, miss, afterwards, when you never come to see me, and heerd you was married, and gone to London; but who'd ha' thought to meet you here! Dear! I'm so o'erjoyed."

"Where is the baby, Nanny? have you any more?"

"Only that one, ma'am, and he's well, thank God, and playing about all the morning, but I've sent him into the town. Why, there he is under the sand, not gone yet! Willy, come here to mammy. There—bow to the lady—Where's your manners?"

With maternal care, she brushed the sand off the curly white hair of the little fellow, who obeyed her injunction, and then shyly hung his laughing face.

"Is that the baby? How years fly! What a dear, bright little face! You must be very fond of him."

"Well—I is," said Nancy, simply, after dismissing the urchin with the kiss he begged. "And what o'er-joys me every day of my life is the thought that I have him all to myself; which is more than I expected once, for my husband's mother—oh! it was all how could she most meddle with him, when he was a babe, and how could she most surely bring him up a Prodesdant, which she is herself, good luck to her! If I hadn't got away from her, she'd ha' made a quarrel betwixt my husband and me; and when he found that out, he cast about for a sitt-y-ation, which would take us away from her, and that's how he fust come to settle here. Yes, that's what he did, for a sensible man he is, ma'am, and a good husband he's bin to me through all. Glad I was to be out of her way, though I'm sorry my husband

brought her coolness on himself through it. And he's her only one, too."

"Does he favour our religion? Of course, he lets you bring up the child in it?"

"Well, ma'am, this is how it is. He's a steady man himself, and he goes to his own church every Sunday as comes, and sometimes he takes the boy with him, ma'am, which at first fretted me greatly; but he says 'tis only to give him a good custom, and he lets me take him to my place whenever I can git there, which isn't often, more's the pity! for 'tis a great way off. He says, so that the lad makes a good man, he may folly any religion he has a mind to."

"Oh Nanny, you have a heavy responsibility! I hope you teach the child his faith. You cannot begin too early."

"Surely that's true, ma'am; and I tries my best, though I'm a poor schol-ard. I'm in hopes he'll soon be big enough to go to chapel of his-self, and hear the good teaching there. But I'm so glad to have him away from his grandmother. She wants him back, but I'll wander the fields with him afore he shall go. Did you ever happen to see her about the neighb'rood while you was at home, ma'am? Old Mrs. Morgan:—you'd know her anywheres by her 'ansome face. I thought you might know her, too, for my husband says that Mr. Massinger was well acquent with her."

"Which Mr. Massinger?"

"Mr. Bernard, ma'am; the young gintleman. Morgan says he used come to the cottage, and be hours with her. That was afore I was married; afterwards, she come to live closer to D——. Myself only saw him with her once, and that was about a month afore Willy were born."

"You mistake, Nanny. Mr. Massinger was not in the neighbourhood at that time. He had been long absent."

"Begging your pardin, ma'am, I see him myself, and a bew-tiful young man he is, and uncommon kind with her. She were ill then, for a few days, and he come up for nothing but to see her, I do b'lieve. That's my

husband callin', ma'am. He's out mostly of nights, and so he sleeps of days, you see. Dear heart! and so I've really bin' speakin' to yourself? I'm so wishful you was going to stay here a month, 'stead of a few days."

But not even a few days did Teresa stay there. On the morrow, Mr. Wimpole privately forwarded to her a note which, under cover, had arrived from Selwyn; a note such as only he could write, when pressed by trial,—brief, bitter, and desperate. He was sure he had been traced to London, and was so hunted that he was sick of his life; he was very unwell, and certain that a serious illness was about to seize him. The letter had evidently been written in pain, and Teresa, picturing her husband lying lonely and ill, was soon in a very uncomfortable state of suspense. With difficulty she restrained her feelings until evening, in expectation of a visit from the confidential agent at the Towers; and when, at dusk, she perceived his approach, she went forward on the sands to meet him, and, telling him of her new anxiety, began to weep.

Wimpole looked concerned, and admitted that he also had some fears on the subject.

"And here am I, so far away, when I ought to be at his side!" exclaimed the distressed wife. "Whatever shall I do? He wished me to wait for the vessel, which will not sail for some days, and, besides, be so long in going round—oh, I cannot wait, under these circumstances. I cannot, indeed, Mr. Wimpole. I must go to him at once. Pray help me."

Her listener pondered; and then said, hesitatingly,

"If you could make up your mind to travel without the little ones, and had any female you could trust them with, you might go directly by coach, and they could follow, in the manner Mr. Grice has planned. The coach, which leaves for London only twice a week, starts to-morrow morning. Yes, ma'am, it is distressing, but what can be done? The youngest you might take with you. I don't think," he added, kindly, while the duty of the mother and the wife struggled for pre-eminence in Teresa's breast—"I don't think there would be any

occasion for you to be uneasy about the children, if you had any trustworthy female attendant for them. My brother and I, of course, will be most happy to do our very best for their comfort and safety."

"Oh, I am sure of that, Mr. Wimpole, and fully trust you: indeed I do. But as for any nurse—Would Nanny—"

"I was just thinking of her, ma'am, and dare say she would undertake the charge. A more honest soul you could not secure. Suppose you ask her, at once?"

Accordingly, Teresa told her trouble to the good creature, who listened, at first with wonder, and then with true concern.

"So he's ill, ma'am. And you're not nigh him, poor heart! Surely if you're so oneasy to go, I'll not refuse you what you ask, seeing I can do it. I'm used to voyaging, for Capt'n Wimpole he often takes me out on the water in the summer weather, and so—dear little lambs! I'll be glad to bring them safe to you. But it'll be hard on you, poor thing, to leave 'em."

Hard, truly it was, and nothing but the tenderest fears on her husband's account, could have nerved Teresa to the effort. All that night the poor mother lay among her treasures—for the small dwelling afforded very limited accommodation—and, as she watched their slumbers, and listened to the deep booming of the waves, she almost felt that she had undertaken more than she could perform. As if to increase her distress, it happened that when, at dawn, she had fallen into a light unconsciousness, her eldest little son began to be very restless, and to moan in his sleep. Suddenly he started up, with heated cheeks, and tumbled hair, and screamed aloud—

"Oh, mamma, mamma!"

"What is it, George?" asked his mother. "You are dreaming, George!"

"Oh, de sea and waves! Take care of me, mamma. Oh, de wild sea!" moaned the little one, in the agitation of some childish dream.

He was soon soothed and lying down, with a sleep sigh, was presently asleep again; but Teresa, greatly

disturbed by the occurrence, remained awake, and nervously asked herself, was this a sign that she ought not to leave the children?

With the broad light of morning, however, the impression made on her by the incident grew fainter; and believing it her duty to go to her husband, she prepared for departure; then, with aching heart, kissed each little face as she sent the children out to play on the sands, for she could not trust herself to a more formal parting.

"Oh, Nanny," she said, crying at the last, on that kind bosom, "bring my babies safely to me, and Almighty God will bless you."

Nanny, with condoling tears, and a hearty kiss, promised everything that could comfort her; and Teresa, taking her youngest child, stole from the scene to the conveyance which awaited her, and was soon driven to the town.

Arrived there, she sought out the captain of the vessel in which the children were to sail, and was greatly reassured by his cheery expressions. The kind-hearted seaman, touched by the circumstance, and by her pale, sorrowful face, accompanied her to the coach, with sincere promises, which greatly contributed to sustain her spirits during her long journey. She met with no more inconveniences than usually attended travellers in those days, and in due time the Highflier rattled through the noisy streets of London, and into the court of the inn where it stopped.

She had written to apprise Selwyn of her coming; therefore, when she found no one waiting for her, and that no message had been left at the bar, she concluded that he was very ill—perhaps unconscious, whispered her fears, and hurried her into a coach. Long seemed the time before she reached her destination,—lodgings in a street at no great distance. On the servant of the house opening the door when the vehicle drew up, she got out, in nervous haste.

"How is Mr. Grice?—He has been ill,—has he not? He lodges here, does he not?"

For the girl looked at her rather stupidly.

"Why, ma'am, I think he was rather poorly. I think he's out, now, but I don't know exactly. I'll see."

"Take the child, my good girl," said Teresa, faintly—she paid the fare. "Now show me to his room. I am Mrs. Grice."

To the dull, close room they ascended, but, sure enough, Selwyn was not there, and Teresa's heart leaped up with a wild yearning to go back—back to the babies she had left.

The landlady now appeared, and explained that Mr. Grice had been gone out some hours. Had he not been unwell? She thought he had, a day or two ago, but nothing much. The lady looked so tired—wouldn't she take a cup of tea, and let Betsy get something nice for the baby, little pretty creature.

Weary and confused, Teresa accepted these offers; and when she was somewhat refreshed, and the child asleep, she lay upon the sofa, listening to the unfamiliar noises in the street below, and starting at every knock. Mr. Selwyn, however, did not turn up until late—He came up stairs with hasty steps, (having been informed below that Mrs. Grice had arrived,) and entered the room, flushed with surprise and pleasure, and, perhaps, with something else. She flew into his arms, yet with the reproach—

"Oh, Selwyn, how could you do so?"

"Do what, my dear?" he asked, after having greeted her with much affection. "Are you really here? Who would have expected it!"

"Why, I wrote to say I was coming. Did you not receive my letter? And I thought you were so ill, from yours."

Explanations here ensuing, it appeared that her letter must have miscarried—that he had been really unwell for a day or two; but, though he tried to make his verbal account consistent with his letter, she perceived that he had written with exaggeration, while under the influence of desperately low spirits. Now, delighted to have her company, (which he had not expected,) and gratified by so strong a proof of affection,

he was in excellent humour, and tried to laugh away her fears about the children—fears which he in no ways shared.

“But *I* am very uneasy about them, Selwyn, and have been miserable about you. Indeed, you did wrong to cause me such pain.”

“Why, I do believe you would have felt more rewarded for your journey if you had found me at death’s door,” he returned. “I don’t remember saying so much—what did I say? Never mind, my darling; I’ve got you again. You know I am never right without you.”

“Indeed, I think that’s about the whole truth. I shall know how to take it, next time!—In dinner-dress, Selwyn! where have you been?”

“Oh, somewhere—at the West End. The fact is, I—I met Annabella and her daughter. They have just returned from Paris, and finding me so moping and lonely, they made me go to dinner to-day.”

“Annabella!” exclaimed the wife, impatiently; and now, perhaps, felt glad that she had returned.

Selwyn laughed loudly at her expression, at her remarks, and told her she ought to know she was worth a hundred Annabellas. The truth is, the lady referred to had caused many an uneasy feeling to Teresa, who had never been able clearly to define the influence she exercised over Selwyn,—an influence which, apparently, had existed for years before his marriage. It could not be anything of love, she thought, for the lady was much his senior, and when free to seek her hand, he certainly had not availed himself of the opportunity; yet she evidently held a high place in his opinion, and Teresa had more than once turned wan while listening to his glowing accounts of her wealth, her beauty, her accomplishments, and deep, deep regard for himself. It did not improve the matter that she had a daughter growing up who bid fair,—so he said,—to rival all her mother’s attractions.

On the following day, Teresa, anxious for the immediate future, in a long conference with her husband reviewed the state of their affairs.

She then found that he, whose high temper nothing could humble, had added to their difficulties by giving offence in a quarter where he had chiefly relied for literary employment, and by this mischance was left, for the present, without an engagement of any value. Of ready money he would have a poor balance when outstanding expenses were settled; although he calculated on the addition of £20 from the sale of some books which he had carried from his library at the Towers, and sent to a titled patron of literature. Also, a few valuables had been saved from the general whirlpool, and were coming with the children's clothes; but here ended their visible resources, and it is no wonder that Teresa, when the monetary enquiry was finished, looked at her partner with an apprehension not easily to be removed.

She had not much time, however, to sit reconsidering the prospect, for her little family would soon be in town wanting a shelter, however humble; so, hiring a strong lassie,—rough substitute for the domestic staff so lately commanded,—she left the infant with her, and went, with Selwyn, on that quest which is known to be so dispiriting and fatiguing by the initiated in like wanderings. Having no furniture, and not venturing to expend, without strict necessity, any of their ready money, they had decided on entering furnished apartments, and accordingly sought all day in a cheap neighbourhood, but without finding anything suitable. Of the numerous places they examined, some were too small, some too well furnished, others objected to receive children—a thousand-and-one difficulties seemed to start up for the discomfiture of the poor mother, who, towards the close of the day, was sometimes on the point of crying when disappointed on the different door steps.

Next morning, Selwyn told her that he had had enough of it, and she must try by herself; so forth she set, with a heavy heart, but did not long regret her loneliness, finding that she could act with more promptitude when unencumbered by his stately presence and fitfully impatient ways.

After a long search, she succeeded in finding suitable

rooms, which had, however, the drawback of being on the upper floors of a publican's house; but, as they were large and cheaply rented, as the house was quiet and respectable, and the landlady a motherly person, Teresa thought she could not do better than engage them, on condition of her husband's approval. It so happened, he did not at all approve when told how the apartments were situated, and sorely tried her gentle temper by declaring that he would not go near the low place, and that she must send to break off the treaty. But he thought better of it, in a few hours, and allowed Teresa to remove their boxes to the new abode, which she had no sooner entered than she became very poorly, and was for some days confined to her bed, from the effects of so much anxiety and fatigue.

While lying there, she was in much uneasiness on account of the absent children, even though they were under Mrs. Morgan's good care, and thought the time very long before they were to be expected in London. Selwyn, who was always particularly kind when she was ill, endeavoured to reassure her, and on two different occasions went, without murmuring, to the docks, to receive them; but, each time, returned to say that the vessel had not yet arrived. When he left on the same errand for the third time, he looked rather grave, and she, turning her white, careworn face to the pillow, thought that if he again came back alone, she should not be able to endure.

However, she was not destined to that trial. Towards evening, as she lay watching Kitty, red-haired and good-natured, rocking the child in arms, and crooning a low, incessant lullaby, her quick ear distinguished wheels coming slowly up the quiet street beneath her window—they stopped.

"Kitty! draw the blind, and see what is it?"

"There's a coach, mum," reported the girl, "and boxes atop, and I sees their heads out at windy."

"Give me the child. Quick. There, run down, and bring them up. God be thanked!" she said, in a weak tremour, and was now sensible, by the sudden lightness

of her relieved heart, how heavy had been its weight of apprehension.

Music to the mother's expectant ear is the clamour which presently ensues below,—the little feet stumbling up the stairs, the childish voices all prattling together. They draw nearer,—now, she sees them through the open door, and, sitting up, opens wide her arms, into which flies Anna, swiftest of the group, followed by two sturdy little brothers, and other fast-toddling feet; while the last but the infant, recognizing her mother, tries, with a cry of joy, to wriggle towards her from the arms of the beaming Nanny. What an uproar,—what a clambering upon the bed,—what smothering kisses from those sweet little lips;—and then, what a tumultuous recognition of “baby,” who, crowing and plunging in the press, seems as much elated as any of them.

“Oh, my treasures, I am rich once more! Oh, Nanny,” cries Teresa, seizing on that worthy creature, “how can I ever thank you, you good, dear soul!”

To which Nanny responds with a warm-hearted hug, and begs her not to think of that. They’ve all been so good—she loved every one on ’em—her cottage would be so lonely without ’em.

When the disturbance was somewhat allayed, she proceeded to give, at wondrous length, sundry particulars desired by the mother's heart. Then, also, Teresa learned that they had had a rough voyage, and had once put back.

“But, lor! Ma'am, there was no danger, and I only felt oneasy for you, knowin you'd be lookin for us. And Capt'n Wimpole, surely he's bin so tender to them babies, all the way.”

“The captain nursed me all the while I was sick, Mamma,” said Anna.

“Cap'in held my head all time when it ached. And he gave me more takes dan Paul,” cried one of the twins, immediately interested when the new and mighty favourite was named.

“Oh, he didn't. And he took me see de big monkey ever-y day, Mamma.”

"God bless him for his kindness!" said Teresa. "I wish I could see and thank him. When does he leave London, Nanny?"

"To-morrow, ma'am, he's obliged, and so I'm obliged too, though sorry I shall be to leave the little lambs. Don't they tire you, ma'am? You look so sick, poor thing. I'll engage them from you, now."

The good woman plumped herself down in the midst of the young tribe,—whose affection and confidence she had quite secured,—and after much tying on of pinafores, and smoothing of curls, led them into the adjoining room, where a repast had been prepared by Kitty. But when it was over, they petitioned so earnestly for leave to "go back to mamma" that she led them in again, on tip-toe, after extracting promises of quiet behaviour, which were carefully kept for the space of three minutes.

"Never mind, Nanny: let them play. I have had quiet enough without them, indeed."

Somewhat later a step was heard coming up stairs—it was that of Selwyn who, after putting his family on their homeward way, had gone to talk over business with the two Wimpoles.

"Here's papa coming up, darlins," says Nanny, probably expecting another demonstration of their sentiments; and it followed, but not in the manner she had naturally anticipated.

On hearing her announcement, the elder children slid into chairs and were silent; the smaller ones nestled up to her apron, and even the youngest but "baby" as she sat perched on the bed by her mother's pillow, forgot to finish the cake in her hand, and awaited the new arrival with hushed, demure little face. The change was too marked to escape even the careless notice of Selwyn, who had heard their lively voices when below; and whether because he observed it with something like a pang, or did not wish to make an unfavourable impression on the stranger present, he looked round on the children with an air of unusual kindness.

"Come here, my boys," he said, and took the twins on his knees. "Well, Anna. Have you no news to give

me of the great sea? Were you frightened? Were you sick?"

But he could not get much conversation out of his little daughter, who timidly advanced to stand beside him: the children, one on each knee, faced each other with a grave regard at their unwonted position; and Selwyn, tiring of their company, soon dismissed them into the adjoining room, whither Nanny followed, and, with brightly soaped faces, packed her "lambs" snugly into bed.

Teresa might well feel as if parting with a staunch friend when, on the ensuing day, she bid farewell to this good woman, whose hasty departure was compulsory. With difficulty induced to accept a reward for her services, Nanny melted into tears of sincere regret while taking leave of the little family, who loaded her with caresses and childish gifts, and exacted hearty promises that she would come and see them next year.

She went; and then Teresa, left to the cares necessarily imposed by a youthful family, aided only by one rough handmaid, had to spell a hard, unfamiliar page in the book of her experience. It was long before any of them grew accustomed to a position so altered. Teresa had taken care to provide her husband with the best room of the set, and there he attempted to study; but, his mind being ill at ease, application was very difficult, and he would sit for hours in gloomy meditation, or, quitting his room in disgust, say to her—

"I can't hammer any longer, if we go to the dogs for it!"

There is no need to linger here in description of the steps by which the family went on that downward way trodden by so many. The descent was gradual, interrupted now and then by a brief check, but not the less certain. The few valuables which they lingeringly retained, disappeared one by one; then, the better clothes of the children; and presently the time came when Teresa, looking round on the little creatures, did not know how they were to be fed, or shod, for even one week behind another. Then was the time, too, when a large hamper, carefully packed as from a long journey, would

arrive in some moment of particular need, containing a goodly supply of comforts, and invariably, (secreted between the covers of some pot of preserved fruit,) a sovereign, or two, which Teresa would take with a thankful prayer, and a blessing on the tender thoughtfulness of her sister Mary. It must be observed, that once, since their late fall, she had received a letter from her grandfather. He had written, as through a principle of duty, to offer education and a home to their eldest boy; but the proposal met with no favour from Selwyn, and the terms in which it was made offended him deeply. He bade his wife write to decline it.

"I will be, in no ways, indebted to your grandfather," he sternly said. "I never had a solitary expectation from him, nor shall my boys have, as long as I can help it. What your sister does, from her affection for yourself and the children, I do not forbid: but there shall be nothing more."

When, after some months of struggling endurance, matters had, at length, become desperate, a little light broke upon the dark days of that period.

It happened that a gentleman, a warm admirer of Selwyn, came to hear of his misfortunes, and, discovering the retreat where that talented head lay hidden, one morning called upon him. Selwyn chose to be invisible; but Mr. Willows spent a painfully interesting hour with the ladylike mother and engaging children, and that picture of gentility in distress, making an ineffaceable impression on his feelings, stimulated him to the kindest exertions. He left Mr. Grice a message, full of respectful sympathy; and, next day, sent a note which induced that gentleman to wait upon his new patron, who gave him very encouraging promises. These were not followed by disappointment, for Mr. Willows made interest so successful in a literary quarter where he had influence, that Selwyn's services were engaged there, at a rate of remuneration which encouraged him to resume the pen with something of his old vigour. His kind friend did not pause here; but, reminding him that he would find it difficult to study where he was cramped for room, and disturbed by a

daily round of various noises, generously spoke of a country house which he possessed, and would let, under the circumstances, at a greatly reduced rent. This tempting offer was not to be refused: Selwyn, when he could not pre-eminently shine, desired nothing more strongly than retirement, and Teresa's drooping spirits revived at the prospect of seeing the children once more playing among fresh grass and flowers. There yet remained a great obstacle in the fact that they had no furniture; but this having been partly overcome by the active kindness of Mr. Willows, they cheerfully prepared for removal to the new retreat so unexpectedly provided.

Their preparations were delayed, for a brief interval, by the following occurrence.

Among Selwyn's few personal friends was a gentleman who, like himself, followed the literary profession, which he would have adorned had his abilities been equalled by his application or steadiness. He came hastily to Selwyn one morning, with an air suggestive of no little uneasiness, and told him that he was never in greater need of his friendly help—it must not be refused.

"You know that I will stretch a point to oblige you, Warner, old fellow," returned the other. "What pickle have you got into now?"

"Why, look here, Grice. You know that I ought now to have that thing, that Biography of —, ready for Bowes. He fully expects it, and has extensively advertised it to appear this month, and—the fact is, I haven't worked at it at all—hardly touched it."

"Bless my heart! And you had ample time allowed you!"

So he had; but that man of brilliant powers and education, that ready-penned writer, was, unhappily, addicted to a failing which inevitably saps the strength of the fairest mind, and brings low as the dust many once destined for "honourable places:"—he drank freely, and, in the society of convivial friends, among whom he shone a bright conversational star, was wont nightly to waste his existence.

"How much have you done? Out with it," said Selwyn, regarding his friend, who reflected disconsolately for a moment, and then burst into a laugh.

"Well, a glowing Introduction, and half the first Chapter—no more! But I'll tell you what I have done well—I've gathered excellent authorities, and made copious notes. Just come home with me, Grice, and look at them; they are ready for your hand. Do be a good fellow and help me, for I'm quite off it, come what may, and I shall be in a mess if Bowes is disappointed this time. I'm in press, you know! By Jove, I must race to get there."

Home with him Selwyn went; and the friends having come to amicable arrangements together, he returned to explain to Teresa wherefore it was they must be detained in London a few days longer. He then shut himself up, for strictly uninterrupted study, in the corner of a quiet Inn known to literati, where the anxious Warner waited on him with the occasional aid he happened to require, and where the best of good things in the land was silently supplied at his least intimation. At the end of a week, Selwyn came forth, haggard and worn, but satisfied: the completed work was delivered at head quarters in due time: Warner got the credit of a very able and correct production, and his friend half the pay. Little was it suspected, in cliques where the news would have "told," under what circumstances the highly esteemed Biography of —— had been written.

This little affair being settled, the family in good earnest began to "flit." Next day found all ready; a small van packed, and despatched early in the morning, Selwyn made comfortable, and seen off to a dinner given by some jovial friends to Warner, in honour of his late literary success; the children arranged in a coach, with as much dexterity as their Mamma and Kitty could exert, yet the vehicle looking, after all, a box full of restless, changing little heads. The landlady came to the door, sorry to part with the small gentry whose feet had so often travelled into her side parlour, the early-discovered store-room of cakes and sweets,—condiments the motherly hearted woman had

frequently bestowed upon them, through a kind impulse which they were too young to discern.

"Good bye, dears. Good bye, Nelly, my pretty bright one! God bless you, Ma'am, and send you prosperous days;—for you've had some weary ones, poor thing," mentally added the woman, as the coach bore away the gentle face, smiling at her from the window.

"Thank you, kind soul! I've had more comfort and respect from you, humble as you are, than I might have had from hundreds during our trouble," murmured Teresa.

"What is the matter, Anna? Why do you cry?" she asked, shortly afterwards; for the child sat silent, with a large tear on each fair cheek.

"Oh, Mamma, we are passing the *dear* place!" she replied, and hid her eyes; at which the mother, with a sudden pang, understood her meaning, and also averted her look.

They were passing the Catholic chapel, which was about a mile distant from their late abode, and whither Anna's feet had daily gone since one Sunday, well remembered during her after life. Let us explain.

That was a hot, bright afternoon, and she had been taken out by Kitty, for some childish treat long promised. Happening on their return to pass the door of the chapel, Kitty, tired of the sun, and attracted by the music, went in, and lingered, in ignorant curiosity. The holy service of benediction was going on, but it was strange to Anna. The child had very seldom entered a place of worship, having, on grandest occasions only, been taken, in the carriage, to the distant country chapel which her mother, when in health, had attended during their residence at the "Beeches." Therefore, quite new to her was the church, the radiant altar, the organ, rolling in grand and solemn strains. Presently began, in simple tunes of wailing sweetness, the Litany of Loretto; and while the prayer, swelled by the voices of the kneeling congregation, floated around and above, the little girl closed her eyes, and leaned her head on the rough shawl of her attendant, seeming in a heavenly dream until the chant had ceased.

The Benediction was then given, and who can tell what a blessing, what sweet attractions of grace, descended into the heart of the earnest-eyed child?

"Oh, Kitty, do let us stay in this lovely place. Only a little while!" she whispered, when the congregation began to disperse.

And again—

"Do let me go kneel *there*, dear Kitty," pointing to a side chapel which looked particularly bright and reposeful; and, stealing thither, she knelt before the sculptured Mother with the Child.

Doubtless the Original is looking, with even a sweeter air, upon the small figure which has strayed to Her feet, and, well understanding the language which that yearning little heart is so wishful, but unable, to utter, takes her, from that moment, under a very close and tender adoption.

But Anna's delightful quiet is soon disturbed, rudely, as life's visible things are wont to intrude on our spiritual moments; for Kitty comes, with warning shove, to whisper how dreadful cross her Pa will be, if they don't get home.

"How far is home from here? Do you think I could come by myself?" enquired the child, as they hastened away.

"In corse you could. Arsk your Ma to let you," says Kitty; which suggestion Anna followed, and obtained the desired permission, when her mother saw that the road was direct and safe.

A most faithful pilgrim to the chapel was the little girl thenceforward. She soon discovered the daily Mass at nine, and other services; and, sometimes taking her brothers, sometimes the trotting Nelly, but more frequently alone, would forget every home privation in the spot so full of attraction and rest. No wonder the dear child now left the neighbourhood with sore regret. On hearing their intended removal first talked of, she had anxiously asked her mother if the new house was near a chapel? to which Teresa, annoyed at the moment, by some trial, had answered rather quickly, "No, it was many miles off." She would have been

deeply sorry had she read the impression immediately given, by her manner, to her little daughter. The child, instinctively, felt that the point of so much solicitude to herself had not her mother's instant sympathy.

But how comes this? Is it possible that Teresa can forget so many strong and sincere resolutions? that she can be growing neglectful of her religious duties? Ah! but look at the difficulties in her way, just now. She has long been too shabby, poor lady, to be seen out, in a Sabbath's daylight, without keen mortification: Selwyn could never bear her to be out of the house while he was in, and, irritated by his misfortunes, was almost cruelly stern to the children during any compulsory absence of hers: besides, the little menage went wofully wrong when left, for even an hour, to the superintendence of the bright Kitty, and housekeepers know that the name of the trial referred to is Legion. Thus it came to pass that Teresa, dispirited by many troubles, very anxious to please her husband, and to maintain the domestic peace which so soon could be broken, had yielded more and more easily to besetting difficulties, and, in truth, had rarely entered a church since her return to London. Self-reproaches on this score she had in plenty. And ah! did there not sometimes rise before her a picture of what might have been, but was not—of sorrows even greater than their own, soothed by resignation and pious practices—of a father leading his offspring betimes to their religious duties—of a Mate, also a Help, encouraging her feebleness in the way he made, instead, so difficult to her? Truly, these thoughts had their moments of dominion, and carried bitterness into her very soul; but she always dismissed them, with the promise,

“It will be better by-and-bye. I will go to my duties, and THEN be more regular.”

But she was in the grasp of those benumbing fingers which easily frustrate such resolutions. Behold her now going to a residence miles from a chapel, without having fulfilled her long-postponed obligations.

To return to the coach. As they rolled along, Teresa

regarded her daughter with an eye troubled by more than one uneasy feeling, and, with caresses, endeavoured to raise her spirits by saying that, on fine Sundays, Kitty should take her across the fields to church, that her brothers would soon be old enough to accompany her, that perhaps a kind neighbour's cart would occasionally have a seat to spare; till, easily cheered by these assurances, the child satisfied her mother by smiling in answer, and at length forgot her grief in the incidents of their long journey. Through the town, the thickly-peopled suburbs, then along country roads where the houses were far between; and, after stopping to rest at a village on their way, off again, now through miles of seemingly interminable lanes. Teresa had never seen such lanes, ragged, silent, and secluded, even in the neighbourhood of her early home, The Grange. After some time they met a little lad, and asked direction to the Woodhouse, as their new abode was named. The lad beamed comprehension, as he replied,

"Are ye the newcomers there? All right: my mammy's keeping the house for ye. Go on about two mile, and ye'll come to a house, and then 'nother, and that's yourn."

Following this direction, they passed a large mansion, and presently drew near a house which all viewed with interest as their future dwelling. They went through a pair of large, creaking gates, up a long, sounding gravel path, and stopped at a flight of stone steps, leading to the principal door. A woman looked out of a balconied window at the side of the house, and, descending some wooden steps, round which wildly clambered honeysuckle and clematis, came towards them with a smile and curtesy. She apologised for not having unlocked the great door, and, ushering them into the house by the way she had come out, Teresa found herself and little tribe in a side-parlour overlooking the lawn and garden,—a cheerful room where the woman, with kind forethought, had placed chairs and tea-equipage from her own cottage, and prepared a meal to which the travellers soon gladly sat down. While waiting upon them, with clattering alacrity, she explained that she

and her family were their nearest neighbours, and inhabited a small attached cottage at the back of the house. Teresa was glad to have neighbours so close, when, having dismissed the coach, and watched it roll slowly up the solitary lane, she felt they had come to settle in an isolated place, and must necessarily be cut off from frequent communication with the world beyond.

"But anything, so as we have health and peace," she murmured, listening with pleasure to the voices and laughter of the elder children, who had sprung from their meal to explore the new place, and were bounding on the lawn, or emerging, with merry calls, from the depths of various shrubberies where they had repeatedly "been lost."

Contenting herself with surveying the premises from different windows as she went through the rooms, she perceived that there was an extensive garden, and a small orchard, each containing bushes and trees, which bore, Mrs. Rogers assured her, the most delicious fruit. The house did not seem to have been inhabited for some time, and, though in tolerable repair, was gloomy-looking, and very large.

"We must inhabit only the half of it," said Teresa to herself, thinking of the scanty stock of furniture procured with so much difficulty. A scanty stock truly it looked when the van, by-and-bye, appeared, and drew up at the steps for unloading; and, under a little impulse of mortified feeling, secretly wishing her kindly officious neighbour had not been on the scene, she could not forbear a remark that the goods were intended to supply only their immediate requirements. The woman's hearty reply shamed her.

"Never mind, ma'am, them children is your best furnitur."

The unpacking being finished, the house was well secured, and Mrs. Rogers then retired, ordering in one of her sons, from next door, as body-guard to the family, who naturally felt timid at being left unprotected in the great strange place. When the children were laid in hastily-invented beds, Teresa dismissed to rest the tired,

though willing, Kitty, and, while awaiting her husband's arrival, busied herself softly among the confusion of furniture, in order to keep wakeful. Presently she felt very weary, and sitting down, with hands clasped on her knees, listened pensively to the stillness of the summer night, broken only by the snoring of her stout guardian in the kitchen. As she thus sat, her thoughts flew from the present to the past, and, entirely forgetting surrounding interests, dwelt upon those innocent days which preceded her meeting with him who had so changed the current of her life.

She saw again herself, exactly pious; Mary, lovely and good; but chief figure in the scene was her mother, with life so full of suffering and practical virtues. Of that dear mother she had often thought, with a self-reproach which had grown doubly painful since she herself had become a parent, and could feel what a home-stab to her heart would be unprovoked disobedience, or deceit, from any of her loving little daughters. How unnatural had been her conduct during the great trial of her youthful breast—what must not her uncomplaining mother have endured, on her account—ah, why had she given her such pain? She could only have a mother *once*! Lately, too, she had been restrained and brief in her home correspondence, naturally reluctant to write while she had only troubles to relate, and, perhaps, secretly unwilling that her friends should fully know how hard were the “lots” which she had chosen wilfully. But she would not again have to blame herself for such neglect; she would immediately prepare for her mother a long letter of love and confidence, tell her of the rural home they had found, and, for the future, seek the sympathy which had always been faithful and prompt, though often disregarded.

Dream on, Teresa. The dear heart in which you have been a sore, but forgiven, thorn is, for once, insensible to your tender touch. You are of the many who, going to make an atonement for injury inflicted, find that, in this world, at least, they are Too Late.

While she reflected, Teresa suddenly felt a most strange sensation, as though a little rush of cold air had

passed her, slightly chilling her whole frame. At the same instant she heard, close at hand, a sound which she could only describe as the gentle beating of wings; and, glancing at the window, saw, or fancied, over the top of the low shutters, a large pinion, shining white in the moonlight, pressed against the glass. She turned clammy with sudden terror, and gasped for breath to shriek, but while in that agitation, she heard, with a wild feeling of relief, Selwyn's hearty voice beneath the window, and his stick rattled against the wooden rails of the steps. A moment sufficed to carry her across the short passage into the kitchen, to wake up the youth, and unbar the door, to which her husband, guided by their voices, came round. He had taken coach to the nearest village, and waiting for the carrier's cart, which passed their domicile, had been put down at the great gates. Seeing him now enter, fresh from the night wind, a figure of manliness and protection, with a fine ham, which he had purchased on the way, slung from a stick on his shoulder, Teresa greeted him gladly, with much of the affection belonging to those old days which had just engaged her thoughts. He was in high spirits, for he had met bright, conversable company in the coach, and was pleased with the rural abode opened to him; so, after dismissing the lad, he very kindly noticed her pallor, and feared she was fatigued by the work of the day.

She replied by telling him of the fright she had just had.

"Ba-ah!" he said. "Very likely you got a chill after your exertions; and you saw nothing more ghost-like than a bat, my dear. The fellow came flapping about my ears as I came up the path. I dare say we shall see many in this old castle of a place."

The subject seemed to engage his fancy, for, while he partook of the supper set ready for him, he jocosely rallied her on her fears, said he had no doubt the old place was offered to them so cheaply because it was haunted, and told her some ridiculous ghost-stories. But he did not treat the matter so lightly when, in the course of a few days, there came to hand a letter

from Mary, containing news of Mrs. Crossly's death. She had died as a saint dies; and the writer, forgetful of her own grief, sought to soothe that of the absent daughter by dwelling on the comforting assurance given by that blessed departure, and by repeating the messages of love and encouragement which the mother had left. This letter was dated some days ago, for, having been directed to their late lodgings, it had been forwarded to the post office nearest the Woodhouse, according to a wish of Selwyn, and there lain until he bethought him of sending to see if any letters had arrived.

Teresa wept for her parent thus, by an untoward accident, dead and buried without her knowledge; but her sorrow was mingled with awe, when, on comparing dates, she found that Mrs. Crossly had expired exactly at the very time when she had sat alone on that first evening at the Woodhouse. This thrilling recollection so disturbed her that, for months, she could not bear to be alone in the parlour, after dusk. Selwyn was equally impressed: like many persons of the same temperament, he had an unconquerable fear of death, and of the Mysteries which lie beyond it. •

CHAPTER VII.

BERNARD MASSINGER.

In a sumptuously furnished chamber whose heavy hangings cast a soothing twilight around, and deaden, to a soft murmur, any outside noise which can disturb air aristocratic—on a bed of down, yet of pain, lies a man who ought to look young, had not an irregular life and uneasy mind given a harassed and worn expression to his yet beautiful countenance. He lately had a fall from a spirited horse: science has done its best for him, and now prophesies that he will presently rise from his couch with only slight traces of the accident which flung him there. But, the surgeons

add, that if he wishes their favourable anticipations to be realised, he must court tranquillity of mind, and forget everything likely to disturb those most irritable nerves. Advice hard for the patient to follow. In token thereof, look at that glossy hair, (which nearly came to the scissors in the slight delirium of ~~two~~ nights back,) now tossed by the movements of the incessantly restless head; look at the large, unquiet eyes; the trembling of the mouth—yet marked by a mournful, feminine sweetness—as he refuses, with peevish disgust, a cup of delicious beverage which the nurse, with simulated solicitude, respectfully approaches to his lips. Ah, another Cup, invisible, but ever present, waits upon him, and the bitter drops send anguish to his heart, fever to his blood, as he drains, and yet finds it full.

As he stills that uneasy head, and seems likely to doze, the softest of audible summons comes to the door: the nurse, with noiseless step, goes outside, and a little storm of whispered question and answer almost breaks the repose of the sick room. Presently, she steals in again, and perceiving her patient is not asleep, but with great eyes regarding her, she approaches to say that Mr. Jenkins tells her a person—a woman—is downstairs, appears very anxious to see him—will not be sent away—says he is to have that paper. She shows him an envelope, which he seizes in a delicate, nervous hand, when he sees, written neatly, the words

“Elizabeth Morgan.”

“Show her up immediately, and retire.”

This woman disappears, (not without an air of offended consequence) and the other enters—a person of matronly aspect, with commanding figure, and a face whose sternly fine features time has not marred, although her hair is snow white. She gives the sufferer a steadfast look with her keen grey eyes, and, going up to kiss his clammy forehead, enquires, is he better? He has revived in a remarkable way on her entrance, and now, holding both her hands, answers her questions with an air of affection. After this, they silently regard each other; and then he says, hesitatingly, with a faint smile,

"Tell me, mammy, are you here through love only?"

"Partly so, Bernard."

"And, perhaps, because you thought I might be delirious, and chatter a little?"

"Partly so," she said, again.

He laughed, though with some impatience.

"What other motive shared in urging your long journey? Come, Mammy, be open."

"Bernard, a sick bed is a trial of firmness in every way. That means enough."

"Oh, you need have no fear!—this is not the hardest rub I have had, and I'm not going to give in. What! call in a humbugging priest, and take to toys again because I have been flung here," he struck his pillow, "for a few days? No fear of it."

He sighed through the pain his vehemence caused him, and added, alas! some impious asseverations.

"Don't exhaust yourself," said his visitor, calmly. "I believe you, of course. It is natural I should wish to know how the land lay: and now, I see. As for coming to you, I would have come to attend you, at the very end of the kingdom, in any case."

"Yes, I know you would," he returned, and, with a boyish action, caressed her hand.

"Now, you are tired, and must talk no more. You look very ill, Bernard; but I shall soon have you strong again. One question—what will you do with that woman who appears to be nursing you?"

"I don't know!—anything you like. Ring that bell, mammy, please."

To the genteel-looking man who answered the summons he explained, that his foster-mother having kindly arrived, she would thenceforward remain in his chamber, and that the nurse must be dismissed.

"Do it handsomely, Jenkins. Give her anything she asks, and get her off. And—there, begone!"

Under the sedulous care of his new attendant, Bernard Massinger made quick steps towards recovery, and soon was able, from a luxurious chair, to look upon Life with such interest as could be felt by a spirit so jaded. This

weak man, who, under the pressure of a mighty temptation, had been induced to forget the calls of justice and religion;—who had himself robbed his youth of love, and fixed in his own heart a sharp and rankling dagger—this weak man was the prey of a spirit like to that of Saul, which, coming upon him at intervals, well nigh drove him to the same “madness,” and sometimes sent him, for days together, into unbroken solitude, sometimes to seek relief in scenes of wildest gaiety. During the physical lassitude attendant on his state of convalescence, this emotion often seized him, and for hours kept him gloomily silent, or in a paroxysm of low weeping, which was unchecked even by the presence of the person who, through peculiar circumstances, yet unexplained, seemed to possess great influence over him. She, evidently a woman of superior intelligence, and calm, resolute will, appeared accustomed to this weakness, and cognisant of its cause; for she invariably let the fit have its way, and patiently pursued her employments until he was again composed, or inclined to converse.

One evening, after both had been silent for a long time, and the laboured sighs which he heaved at intervals, had ceased, she looked up from her needlework, and observed—

“There is one thing, Bernard, which you will soon be forced to do.”

“What is that?” was his languid query.

“I have told you before—marry. Shake your head, if you like, you will find it best, for all that. Why? Why, because the life you now lead, unrestrained, yet lonely, without a single interest, is not good for you. For my part, I think so much brooding and solitude will, one day, upset your reason.”

“Perhaps so,” he said, moodily. “But how can I help it? I should abhor any woman I might take. There is not the shadow of a feeling left in my breast to give her.”

“What need of it? Marry without. She would, at least, be a wholesome restraint upon you. Besides, Bernard, you might have a child, and love it as children

can be loved." The speaker's hard eyes softened, and she paused to check a sigh, evidently evoked by some deep feeling. "There is Miss Overstein, beautiful and accomplished, I hear, whose mamma would give one of her ears for your alliance. Well—say what you please; it is my fixed opinion that some such interest you require, and must soon have, or you will go wrong."

Her listener did not like the subject.

"Even you talk like a woman—let the matter drop," he replied; yet he felt that, on this point, she knew him well. That heart had been peculiarly formed for tender ties, and in early missing them, he had missed the most powerful and beneficial influence which a character like his can ever feel.

The next day, as Bernard was looking over some letters which, during his illness, had arrived, and been laid aside, he opened one from the steward of his estates: after reading carelessly enough for some way, he came to a passage which arrested his eyes, and paled his lips. He read farther; then, looking at the date again, found it three weeks back, and thereupon groaned aloud. His nurse, entering soon after, found him sitting meditatively, shading his face with a trembling white hand. A glance at the open letter seeming to give her a key to the cause of his emotion, she quietly put aside the rich jelly she had been about to offer, and asked—

"Have you news from the North?"

"Mr. Crossly is dead. He had a fit, and—read this letter."

She did so; then remarked,

"All this is no news to me, however, my dear boy. It was talked of, everywhere, before I left for London."

"You say so! And never told me of it!"

"How could I tell you, before you had bodily strength to take news reasonably? Ask yourself, Bernard. Besides, you can mend nothing. Now, if you will listen calmly, I will give you more particulars than your agent could do, for I think I know everything about the matter."

Accordingly she gave a relation, in substance briefly as follows.

Some time after Teresa's marriage, Mr. Crossly had become interested in a project for the formation of a railroad in the neighbourhood—a scheme then quite new, and regarded with strongly conflicting opinions by all classes of people. He secretly risked a large sum in support of the undertaking, which, unfortunately, fell through, and was, for the time, abandoned as unfeasible. After awhile, the same project was renewed; and Mr. Crossly, deceived by fair appearances, and hopeful of recovering his former loss, was induced again to take part in it; but this time some rogues had a hand in the concern, and the result was another failure, to the great injury of many persons, and his total ruin. Sternly meeting every responsibility, the old man, without a murmur, deprived his age of the least provision, sold the Grange, and, retiring, with his dutiful granddaughter, to a temporary home offered by some kinsfolk, was there seized with a paralytic fit, the consequence of so much agitation. He rallied to receive the last sacraments, and ended a rigid, but honest, life a few hours afterwards.

These incidents,—which had occasioned a storm of gossip in the neighbourhood, just before her departure,—Mrs. Morgan related to Bernard, who was greatly moved while he listened.

“Poor grandfather!” he said, once more using the name familiar to his lips in the days of their household intercourse. “And Mary.”—

He choked at the involuntarily uttered name, for the image of her, now twice an orphan, could never rise before him without bringing a wild pain, which years failed to weaken.

His companion paused, as if waiting for a question, but none coming, she remarked,

“Since you mention her, Miss Crossly is, at present, with her kinspeople, the Thrales. I have heard she intends to remain there, and undertake the education of her little cousins.”

He listened without comment, though evidently in disturbance, produced, perhaps, by some new ideas which he wished to hide from those observant eyes.

Not another word on the subject was offered by either.

Mrs. Morgan did not remain in London when her patient was restored to his usual health. The pair, so strangely in each other's confidence, parted with the same kindness which had characterised their meeting: there was even tenderness in her eye, as she gazed on him from the window of the coach to which he had accompanied her. She did not know how deep a sigh of relief he drew at her departure, as though delivered from a great restraint; nor that he immediately posted north, with the eager haste of one whose thoughts are bent on some object with feverish perversity.

Did he gain what he sought? As he soon wandered away to the Continent, a lonely, unhappy man as before, it is to be concluded that he did not; and that she whom he put to so painful a test, was as true to her resolution when cast penniless from her home, as she had been in the day of temporal prosperity. She had early said that she could not ally herself to an irreligious man; and the Lord for whose sake she said so, prevented her heart from breaking in the bitterness of her protracted trial. It is not for us to spy into the privacy of that faithful, patient, uncomplaining life, with its one enduring disappointment, and its religious principle. Enough to know that Mary Crossly dwelt apparently contented with her lot, in an atmosphere of cheerful peace which always surrounded her, and intended to devote her days to the education of two young kinsfolk, who had been left orphans.

CHAPTER VIII.

LIVING IN RETIREMENT.

A summer's noon in the country. A still, sultry heat seems to whiten the fields around the Woodhouse, and miles of narrow lanes, with ragged hedges, which, in some places, meet overhead in an interlacing of light and shade, and are rich in blackberries and promise of wild nuts. Come through these large, rusty gates, and look around. The extensive garden is bare of flowers, although when the occupants of the house first came, it had bloomed in floral luxuriance; but Mr. Grice having, soon after his arrival, been seized with an horticultural fit, had uprooted all such "useless" embellishments to make room for favourite cabbages and beans. A large bed of splendid strawberries had shared the same unhonoured fate, to the enduring sorrow of old Rogers of the cottage behind, who is delver, gardener, and, it may be added, general flitcher, on the premises. "Master" might, without loss, have been less precipitate in those revolutions, for he has long been tired of his money-draining hobby, and has left the ground, in a great measure, to the dominion of most magnificent weeds. Neglect, however, does not wholly reign here, for, between spaces of clodded earth or rank vegetation, we see several large plots of potatoes, flourishing beans and peas, with other culinary produce; and a little farther on, appear lines of fruit-bushes which, although no longer in their best days, are still of service. The larger trees are numerous, and bear well, especially those that shade the rough lawn; and many is the pocket or apron full of wet, ripe fruit which the children, in the early morning, or after a windy day, bring in from the long grass under certain favourite and well-known branches.

Leaving the cool lawn, we cross the wide, crackling,

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gravelled path, and ascend the steps of the balcony, which, like everything else about the place, does not seem to be in very sound condition, and long ago had its original coat of green picked away by the sun. How silent is the warm air! The rooks in yonder trees caw lazily, and a hen, from the cottage yard behind, has hopped through the dividing wicket gate, and marched round, with a chick or two, and her perpetual cluck-cluck; but nothing else is to be heard, although we are close to the open glass door of the sitting room. Is any one within?

Yes, children are at study round the table, and their mother, with gentle face, sits at work among them. They must get their tasks done in silence, for the old house easily echoes sounds, and papa is overhead, writing hard; and if a book drop, or a voice rise above a whisper, there will follow that admonitory stamp above, which must not be heard twice. Presently a clock gives twelve strokes, indistinctly heard through the green baized door which keeps out the clatter of the kitchen. The children's faces relax, for they are free to go play; the bigger boys put away their Latin themes, and George, the eldest, tries to cheer a little fellow, whose pale, smeared face shows he has had a sore morning's work over that grammar.

"Come on, Alfred. Don't I know where there are such fine blackberries for ma's pudding to-morrow! Who'll be up the lane first?"

They seize their caps, tread lightly beneath their father's window, and tear up the garden with buoyant steps.

"Why don't you go, love? it would do you good," said the mother's mild voice to her second son, Paul, who, seeing his sister Anna come in to clear the littered room, had lingered to help her.

"I will, soon, mother. I am just going next door, to see poor Mark. He was so ill last night."

"Ah, I am afraid his hours are numbered, poor lad," said Teresa. "There is Helena under the trees, with baby. Paul, my dear, tell her to bring her to me."

Accordingly Helena, a bright young girl, with her father's intelligent expression and quick eyes, came up the steps, a curly-headed little one clinging to her hand, and an infant in her arms—(poor Teresa, there was always a baby in the family)—and, after delivering up her burthen, went off immediately, with a laugh, and the little prattler, for a chair moved on the bare boards overhead, and a stately step was heard.

Next moment, Selwyn entered the room, took a turn or two up and down, and yawned wearily.

"You are tired, love," observed his wife, kindly. "Will you not give up for to-day? You are working too hard."

"The steam of that washing is all over the house!" he said, without noticing the remark. "How strange it is that you can't keep the doors shut, among you. Anna, bring my hat and shoes."

He put them on, rebuked his daughter for dropping a few crumbs as she spread the cloth for dinner, and went out for his accustomed walk in the garden.

From hints given above, it will be concluded that neither Selwyn's domestic rule, nor his temper, were the gentler for time. Those who are as willing to excuse him as his wife has always been, may consider this a natural consequence of the troubles wherewith it seems his lot to do battle. Hard, indeed, were some of the difficulties which had visited the family of late years—how hard and how numerous is known only to themselves, as the children, with an inherent delicacy or pride, never commented openly on the subject, and, whenever they went abroad, endeavoured to hide, under a genteel appearance, all signs of the heavy experience which should not have touched their years. One sort of trial, however, was always spared them—they never knew the disgrace and petty annoyances of Debt. Selwyn, a man of conscientious principles on some points, having once been guilty of that social crime, had, at the same time, made a solemn vow that no earthly consideration should ever afterwards tempt him to repeat it; and he unflinchingly kept that promise through the pressure of no light privations. His children,

when capable of mature reflection, remembered, with respect, that strong good trait in their father's character; and they remembered another—that he was always eager to work, and had more than once seriously injured his health by unremitting labour. Many a writer has worked not half so hard, yet achieved a steady prosperity. The poor gentleman used to say that it was his fatality to get fame, while others got money; but for this there existed a cogent reason or two, easily to be discovered.

In the first place, he invariably, through need of ready cash, sold the copyrights of such volumes as he wrote during the intervals of his other engagements, and he had opportunities of knowing that they carried a handsome income into some pockets, though certainly not into his. Again, through an unfortunate heat of temper, he was sure, early or late, to offend any employer, and thus was often forced to accept casual engagements, which were comparatively not lucrative, or to spend weeks in idleness, which he regretted, but could never be induced to avert by timely concession. We may here observe that, according to this custom, he had long ago displeased the literary gentleman who, on his removal to the Woodhouse, had bid fair to be a very generous patron. If any one care to hear about that breach, the particulars thereof are simply as follows:

Selwyn had sternly "cut up" some books forwarded to him for reviewing; the authors had sent in not unreasonable complaints, and careful justifications,—a proceeding which only brought a keener lash from the unseen whip of criticism. Mr. Deanes, being perhaps unwilling to provoke a warfare, had then privately expostulated with Selwyn, who returned him a spirited reply, refusing to have his opinions dictated or shackled by any man on earth. This little affair occasioned a coolness and gradual estrangement between the two gentlemen—much, be it added, to Teresa's concern, for she knew that Mr. Deanes was prepared to be a sympathetic friend, and a liberal employer.

While this retrospective view has been briefly drawn, Anna has laid the dinner, and, at the sound of a hand-bell, the young people come from different corners—

Paul last, from the sick bed where he has read and prayed. Meals at that table are always uncomfortable times. Selwyn carves and portions, but with no affection or care; the food is plain, even to coarseness, and yet so much is consumed that the wonder is, how it has been regularly supplied; the parents do not often converse; and the children sit in silence and restraint. To-day is more than usually dull, for the father is engrossed in thought, and the mother depressed by anticipation of a cloud which is gathering overhead, and will soon descend.

They presently disperse from table, and the elder girls quickly clear and arrange the room. And, by the bye, it is greatly to the credit of those two little maidens that, although both were possessed of more than common intellect, and were rapidly advancing in an education of a high order, they were of such assistance to their mother in the multitudinous daily duties of a household, that the want of a resident handmaid was not felt to be a serious discomfort by the rest of the family. For Kitty, the red-haired, after having served them faithfully a long time, had visited the parish church one morning, and then commenced housekeeping on her own account in the next village; and although she came, a week afterwards, all ribbons and smiles, to see the family whom she loved, and offered to hunt up the neighbourhood to find a "handy girl" for her vacant place, Teresa was privately unwilling that strange eyes should observe certain shifts belonging to those troubled days, and preferred to try how far she could do with the help of none but her good, bright girls. And, it may be repeated, a pleasant sight it was to behold those young creatures beautifying an unkind lot by the constant practice of patience and humility.

Where had they learned such dutiful ways so well?

First, by the knee of the mother who, then pious and fervent, was aware that instruction and self-discipline cannot begin too early, and had been careful to fill their opening minds with lessons simply received, and faithfully remembered. Lately, they had been blessed with other tutelage. The wide, straggling Mission in which

they lived, was under the direction of a band of holy men, whose lives, even more eloquently than their words, preached self-abnegation, and all the virtues of a mortified Christian life; and although their church was four miles off, even by the nearest way across the fields, the young family attended there with regularity.

Did their mother accompany them?

Ah, the weakness of human resolution! Never! There were some real difficulties in the way of her frequent attendance, but that she NEVER performed the bounden obligations of a Catholic, was owing to the supineness into which she had allowed herself to be drawn, and which is so powerful over the soul it has once enthralled. She was now in that state which had once excited her wonder and lamentation: she fulfilled no religious duty, and yet was zealously attached to her faith.

But, though negligent herself, she never ceased to be very solicitous about her children's regular observance. Many and many a Sabbath morning she would burthen herself with more household employments than her strength could perform, in order that not one of the young creatures might be debarred from their anticipated weekly treat—the Mass at ten, the sermon, the catechism, which immediately followed—and, often looking, with a fond eye, after the pretty figures in the sun, as they set off betimes on their long, lonely walk, she would murmur,

“I am blest in them, for their hearts seem to turn instinctively the right way; otherwise, how would it all have been? God have mercy on me!” she would add, and sigh.

With the religious training of the children Selwyn did not interfere. He was strict with regard to secular education; punished severely when allotted tasks were not carefully performed, and rebuked his wife if the girls happened to be detained over their domestic duties during the hours appointed for study; but, as yet, she had no cause to complain that he had forgotten the promise on this head so definitely given her, before marriage. She had reason to value this fidelity the more, since it certainly did not spring from any increasing respect or inclination for her

creed. Alas! Teresa had long ago ceased to hope that her husband would eventually be a Catholic, though how long that hope lingered with her, how unwillingly it was abandoned, cannot easily be told. In earlier days, she had sometimes ventured to allude to that other promise he had given, but never fulfilled—the promise of an impartial inquiry into the tenets of catholic belief; but he evaded her allusions, or, if in a merry mood, proceeded to light remarks, which showed her what he *could* say on the subject if ever he might choose, and at length induced her to court silence on such topics.

Though this disappointment was a thing never to be forgotten by her, she was yet thankful that matters grew no worse, as she owned might easily be the case, especially when she had heard some of the anecdotes current in the neighbourhood, and duly reported to her by the talkative Mrs. Rogers. That lady was a gossip of no mean powers; and, as Teresa shared in a failing common to the best women, and could be interested, for a fair space of time, in the doings of her neighbours, it happened that she often lingered beside the tub on washing days.

"I likes Catholics, mum," Mrs. R. had frequently said. "I've knowed a many in my time, and 'cos they're mostly good, makes me like their per-fession."

"But, Mrs. Rogers, I am afraid that if you use no better argument than that, you might blame our religion if you chanced to come across bad Catholics. The conduct of an individual does not affect his faith."

"No, o'course not, mum; but, somehow, most Catholics are better nor their neighbours,—to my thinking, at least. There's poor Mrs. Swete, above here, I've knowed her *many* a year, yet never heered her give a hard word to a soul. And *so* reg'lar at her chapel, mum. I wonder her hus-i-band can worry her so. He's a Protesdand."

Teresa was interested at once.

"Yes, mum, and fower dear chil'ren have they, yet *not one* baptized as *she* wants. He have them all away, from the very fust, to his Church, and it's done there,

afore ever she can get out. She do fret about it, poor lady."

'To-day it is another neighbour's dilemma.—

"Mrs. Ribton's got a son and 'ear, mum."

(This was the lately-taken wife of a Catholic gentleman of property, who lived near the Woodhouse, and who—being himself a man of learning—no sooner heard of Selwyn's proximity, than he had endeavoured to form his acquaintance, and that with a degree of respect and earnestness hardly to be resisted by even the reserved scholar.)

"Indeed, Mrs. Rogers—How is she going on?"

"Very fair, mum, and baby too. I was up there yest'day, all day."

"I suppose there will be a fine christening. Why, the monks' little church will hardly hold the company!"

"No fear, mum, about *that*. The fine chris'nin 'll keep for the next baby, praps."

"What do you mean, my good soul?"

Mrs. Rogers softly rubbed away betwixt two walls of fleecy suds.—

"Why, mum—he! he!—there's been a great uproar about it, and the place out at windies, almost. You see she's a Methody, or somethink like: and he being so fond of her, she praps didn't think he'd have any will about it—leastways, not agin *hers*; and she, quiet enough, thought the babe would be left to her own way, and her mother's. Her ma's with 'em, mum—Sich a size of a lady, to be sure! she'd make three of you, begging your pardin for it.—Well, he, poor gentleman, must have been sore put to it: for a man, you knows, mum, can't manage like a woman, and he couldn't have the child out, or anythink, without its being knowed. So what does he but brings in one of the gentlemen from the Monster-ry—like a friend, you mind,—and *he* asks to see the babe; so down the nurse brings it, never thinking for what: and its father takes it, and 'tis all done then and there. Lor! there *was* a noise over it. Mrs. Ribton was in fits all day, and her mother do vow that sooner than see her darter bear a

papist (begging your pardin, mum,) she'd sooner see her in her grave, and that babe sha'nt be one, after it all. Cook's been telling me all about it."

"The dear, priceless, little soul—oh, that God would take it now!" sighed Teresa. "What will its father do? How does he seem, Mrs. Rogers?"

"He seems down, o'course, and he's been a-trying to make it up with 'em. They was quieter yest'day. Oh, he'll give in to them: he must have peace. Lor, what chance has a man got?" added the lady, who rather cleverly "ruled the roast" on her own hearth. "Miss Anna, don't carry sich a pile of things; surely they're too heavy for you. Leave 'em to I, miss. I'll rinse 'em all through the tub, by and bye."

"Thank you: if you will, I'll go and sit with poor Mark. He will be alone, when Paul comes in to school. I will brush up, and go."

She busily cleared the neatly kept kitchen, while Helena, her bright face shaded by overhanging leaves, came to sit on the outside sill of the open window, to dandle, and sing to, the fair little baby.

"Are you not tired, Anna, working so long in that hot kitchen? If you will come out and take baby, I will finish for you. Oh, why not, dear? What a glorious sun! it will bleach the clothes as white as snow. We shall have something to do to-morrow, Anna, folding and damping them all. There goes Mrs. Rogers up the garden, with a great basket of wet things—there!—she has dropped something, and does not see it. Shall we go, pretty baby, and pick it up? Come, then."

She went,—a girlish, pretty figure, with the sun bright upon her hair, and the infant's white frock,—first pausing to ring the bell for afternoon school. Anna went into the side kitchen, with bowl and towel for the younger scholars who, instantly obedient to the summons, came with little, heated faces to be washed, and then kissed, by the dear sister, who encouraged them to go willingly, and behave *very* quietly in the school-room, by promise of a pleasant stroll in the new-mown

fields, when the long afternoon hours shall have worn away.

The usual silence then fell upon the house. Anna, thinking that, as Paul had not appeared, he was waiting for her as relief-guard beside the sick pillow, prepared to go to the cottage behind.

The dying lad already referred to, was an object of deep interest to the young people, who, finding him, on their first arrival, a little white-haired, bright-eyed lout, had seen him gradually undergo a transformation as unexpected as it was striking. Injured by an accidental fall, which rendered a dangerous operation necessary, and brought on a lingering decline, the boy gained mental as he lost bodily power; and, as the delver's skilful blow will crack the earth, and reveal the concealed treasure, so the stroke of affliction had opened the apparently clouded mind of this young peasant, and displayed a rich natural store which might, otherwise, have lain imprisoned and unknown. He became athirst for knowledge; and, during his lengthened illness, so eagerly and steadily devoured the not limited instruction which the elder children could impart, that they presently looked, with surprise, on a pupil as well informed as themselves, and even more apt. Selwyn, to whom talent of any sort was a passport to special favour, took much interest in his progress, supplied him with excellent books, and predicted bright things of him, should he ever recover.

But, greater boon even than awakened intellect, was the gift of true Faith which blest the suffering youth. He had early shown a liking for Catholicity, and a desire to learn its tenets; to which his companions responded with the warmth of youthful apostles, and supplied him with such explanations and religious books that the gracious work was soon finished, and another soul led, by means of a Cross, into the Church of Him who was Crucified. Not long ago, a clerical looking figure had visited the cottage on an errand, to honour which George and Paul had awaited him in the porch, with readily-lighted tapers, while their sisters decked the chamber above with every possible adornment; and

when he quietly departed, he had left the convert's earnest soul enriched and happy beyond human expression.

Since that event, Mark had been a teacher to all ; an unconscious teacher of lessons sweet to those who could understand, and of strange, useful significance even to the ignorant relatives by whom he was surrounded. Some verses which he wrote about that time, and which Paul discovered under his pillow, may give testimony of his sentiments.

LINES WRITTEN DURING SICKNESS.

Lord, may Thy Will be done.—This murmur lies
Soft as a Sabbath's stillness, on my breast,
Soothing these struggling doubts and fears to rest
Which ever, to my torture, try to rise.

Thy Will be done, oh FATHER.—Blessed name !
Which ever, ever these faint lips repeat,
And with a hope that, each time, grows more sweet,
Of gaining on Thy love a stronger claim.

Father, Thy child doth love Thee,—and would give
Entire submission to Thy blessed Will :—
Stifle this mortal breath Thou gav'st, but still
Oh, Lord, permit my trembling soul to live.

Lord, hear my prayer :—If Thou wilt that I tread
Death's solemn way, and feel Its shadows roll,
Close, and more close, around my shivering soul,
And fain would pray, yet cannot, for great dread,—

Oh, THEN remember I HAVE called on Thee,
And help me in that terrible distress !
Father, I know Thou wilt be pleased to bless
That strife I, for Thy love, meet willingly.

Yea, and—so bounteous is Thy gracious love !—
These sleepless nights, this sharp and wearing pain,
These deathly faintnesses, may be *my gain*,—
And e'en these ling'ring fears may, each one, prove,

A blessing, sent me by Thy Hand divine,—
A glory won, if but a Cross borne well.—
Oh, dearest Father, how these tears do swell
For joy to find Thy love is so benign !

If it e'er please Thee that my ling'ring pain
Shall quit me ; that Thine earth (so full of grace
And beauty!) shall be still my dwelling-place,
This feeble frame be nerved by strength again :—

To Thee that rescued life devoted be !
Teach Thou my feet some useful path to go.—
Oh, happy feet, if they might toil to show
For steps behind, a smoother way to Thee !

The lingering hope with which the lines concluded was not to be realized.

Anna, going through the little gate which divided the garden of the Woodhouse from the yard of its humble neighbour, met her brother Paul hastening round, with a pale, disturbed face. He spoke in an awe-struck way.

"Anna—oh, Anna—he is so strange all at once. I think he is dying."

She paled too,—for Death is a specially awful presence to blooming youth,—but said, collectedly,

"Call his mother—she has gone to the hedge. And tell,—yes, tell papa."

She went quickly forward, through the sanded kitchen, but paused, for a moment, before ascending the steep stairs which led into the one cottage-chamber, long appropriated to the sufferer's use. She received a pang and a solemn feeling when she looked at him. Emaciated he had long been, and often had she seen that countenance clammy with weakness and pain, therefore it was not those appearances which struck her, but an expression very marked and unfamiliar. The momentary whiteness and insensibility which had startled Paul had gone, however, and the spirit, preparing for departure, knew her directly, and forced the body to a sign of recognition. His fingers, which she touched, closed

with a perceptible effort, and his eyes grew larger, with an asking look in them, which she answered by holding a little blessed cross to his lips.

"Oh, dear Mark, don't be afraid. In a minute—you will see God. Do you feel peaceful?"

A remarkably soft expression came into his eyes: he was evidently going without any fear.

"Try to say, 'Jesus.' Do, dear Mark—Jesus—Mary."

There followed a difficult whisper; and with those Holy Names the last earthly sound in his ears, he slowly fainted away from a world of pain.

Anna, not knowing he had gone, continued to touch his lips with the blessed symbol, and earnestly to pray, until roused by the presence of her father and Paul in the room. Selwyn was very grave, for death always impressed him strongly. He gave one reverential look at the quiet figure on the bed, but not a second.

"We can do nothing for him—he is gone," he said. "Shut the window, my boy—close. Anna, could you, —well, never mind."

"Yes, papa, I can," she returned quietly; and, with light touch, pressed the lids over the inexpressive eyes. The face then looked singularly soft and peaceful. There was nothing to be feared beside that happy death-bed.

The brother and sister remained to pray, though somewhat disturbed by the lamentations of the poor mother below, who had rushed into the kitchen to fling her apron over her head, and sob, but would not go up stairs.

"I couldn't see him go—I couldn't," she moaned to Teresa, who had followed to comfort her. "Oh, 'tis too soon for him to leave us! I didn't think it 'ud been yet. Such a hearty brek-fast as he did take, ma'am; with nigh all the honey-cakes they sent him from the Monster-ry. And such boo-tiful broth as is ready for him. Just look—the spoon stands up in it. And he'll never have it, nor anythink I can get him more! Oh, my lad!"

Teresa stayed, trying to soothe that loud grief, and

raise thoughts so material to better things, until a poor neighbour came in to condole with the living, and perform the last offices for the dead. The clamorous, though not lasting, sorrow of the bereaved parent did not prevent her from resuming the interrupted duties of the wash-tub, at which she presented herself, within an hour, the corner of her apron at her eyes.

"Surely," she remarked, "'tis no use letting all them wet things spile, and only next door. It's little my boy 'll mind me, if I go or stay."

That evening the children could talk of nothing but the solemn occurrence, and had prayers and Litany for the departed soul. Every day, until the funeral was over, they met for that charitable observance; and, unbidden, carefully avoided all play on that side of the house—although the younger ones would often steal round to gaze, with awed faces, upon the silent window of the room wherein lay such a mystery. Paul seemed more deeply impressed than any, and spent hours in that chamber, in reverential meditation and prayer. The noise of cottage life went on below; the mother clattered about her usual avocations; old Rogers smoked his pipe until the air was heavy with coarse tobacco, yet beside the mute figure of his late companion sat the lad, silent with thoughts which largely influenced his after life.

"Don't you think, love, that George looks ill?" remarked Teresa to her husband, shortly after this.

George had been ailing for a few days past; would not go near the cottage while the dead—now beneath the sod—lay there; seemed, this morning, particularly flushed and nervous.

"Come here, George; are you going to die too? What ails you?" asked his father kindly; at which the lad looked up, with bright, heavy eyes, and complained of head-ache.

At the close of the day, he was in bed; and, holding his mother's hand in his hot clasp, answered her earnest gaze by saying,

"Mother, I am afraid I've a fever."

"Good gracious, my dear, what makes you say so?"

"Look here, mother, if you won't be too anxious, I will tell you. You know that last week I took a note to the miller. Well, I had to wait some time till he came in, and all at once I felt so queer and sick. However, I did not notice it much, but, as I was coming home, it came over me again so strangely that I had to go into Kitty's cottage for some water. She told me the scarlet fever is in the village, and two of the miller's children are ill with it. I was afraid, then, I had caught it; but until I found if mine were merely a passing sickness or not, I wouldn't make you anxious by speaking about it."

The brave boy had kept his resolution as long as nature would permit; and now told his mother, who wept through consternation, that it might not be the fever, after all, or that he might have it very lightly. But he rapidly grew so ill that Selwyn, overcoming his proud reluctance to introduce a stranger into the house, sent Paul on a long walk up the winding lanes, for the doctor who had lately come to settle in the nearest village. He soon arrived;—a clever, kind-looking man, who had heard much of the "great scholar" and sweet children who lived in the old house, and, maybe, had glanced at it, with interest, as he sometimes rode by. Full of interest, and of sympathy too, were his thoughts as he was taken by Teresa through the domicile. The parlour was tidily furnished; but for signs of comfort, elsewhere, he looked in vain;—a barer room than that in which his patient lay, the good gentleman had not often entered in the course of his varied visitations. He pronounced the disorder to be scarlet fever, which then was very prevalent; and, after giving some careful directions, departed, promising to send medicines immediately, and to call again that day.

And then Teresa, hoping to avert the dreaded contagion, instituted a system of strictest precautions; would allow no communication with that part of the house, and no one but Mrs. Rogers to assist her in the sick

room. Of course, it was all in vain. On the third morning Helena, at the breakfast table, suddenly fell down, giddy and sick; and, in the course of the day, a wailing little sufferer was placed in bed beside her. Contagion flew swiftly, and, sparing both the parents, laid its irresistible touch upon one, and then another, of the flock, until all were down, in various stages of the disorder. How strongly did the mother then feel, that all her previous trials had been light compared with this, which, while it made her pallid with apprehensions, yet nerved her frame to fulfil the extraordinary and continual exertions required of her. But the painful time of suspense, at least, was not of long continuance. The sufferers all possessed good constitutions, and being nursed carefully, without ignorant mistakes, the distemper soon promised to be in no instance fatal.

"Which of you could I afford to lose? Not *you*; nor you, indeed; nor you, my darling!" murmured Teresa, as she went from bed to bed, with the attentions it was her sole comfort to bestow. Her children, devotedly attached to her, were never easy but when she was near, and, gratefully mindful of her solicitude, remembered, in after years, how cool was the fevered air wherever she had moved, how easily lay their limbs after her arrangement of the bed, how copious were the nice drinks, brought up, in great jugs, by her slender hands.

Something occurred during this Visitation, to give Teresa a peculiar pang of distress.

The elder children, on being taken ill, had petitioned so earnestly for spiritual aid, that she had gone to her husband, and asked leave to indulge them. To her surprise and pain, he demurred, reminding her how much he disliked their privacy to be disturbed.

"I know that, but he should not come near *you*," she humbly replied. "A good man, remember, love—to whom poverty is nothing new or contemptible."

"It is very fine, but your good people can pry, I assure you," he rejoined, with some ill-temper. "What have the geese got into their heads that they want him? Can't *you* pray with them as much as they like?"

"Yes, my dear; but I could not do what their director can, for their peace."

"Oh, it is a whim, and no more. I don't wish to be needlessly troubled. If they happen to be in danger, they may have their priest; but not now."

"Oh, Selwyn, consider! What service could he be then, if they become delirious, or insensible?" she said, in tears at the thought. "Do, I entreat you, let me do as they wish."

"You silly woman, they will be neither delirious nor insensible. Does not Carson say they are taking the fever very favourably? I tell you again, I am not inclined to be mortified by being seen in this wretched state; and unless any of them should be in danger, no monk comes here."

With which words Selwyn, annoyed at her "pertinacity," went to pace in the garden.

She looked after him—and then went up stairs. The children noticed that there was a terrified sort of look on her face, and that her lips quivered while she framed some excuses, which did not deceive them, although they yielded patiently to the disappointment. When the doctor came that day, he regarded her quite as attentively as the divers little beds, and told her she was doing too much; she must put away anxiety, and take a good rest. He repeated those remarks to Selwyn, whom he met in the garden.

"Such a woman as that ought never to be ill: we miss her too much," he added; and, perhaps, as the worthy gentleman rode away, he had his own thoughts concerning sundry things he had noticed in that household.

There is sincere goodness in the world, if we discover its lurking-places. This kind doctor, though practising in a poor neighbourhood, and burthened with a family, could yet afford to feel such sympathy for the inmates of the Woodhouse that he cheerfully spared time and medicines in their service, while pretty sure, from Selwyn's frank explanation, that he was not likely to be requited—in this world, at least.

Sickness at length departing, the young people were

happily brought to convalescence, though not, for a long time, restored to their usual health or spirits. Indeed, some of them looked so delicate, that their mother eyed them with anxious affection, and listened with a pang to the doctor, when he gently recommended nutritious diet. What would she not have given them, had the good things of the world lain at her command? As it was, their fare, perforce, was of the plainest kind—the supply not always certain. Once more, they were gliding into circumstances the most necessitous, and the early weeks of that autumn proved more trying than had ever fallen to the children's hard experience. They often talked afterwards over the privations which, however,—thanks to the gay courage of youth—seemed lighter at the time than when under retrospection; and for years could not see an apple without remembering the rosy fruit (laid in straw on the floors of some empty attics,) of which platesfull, baked with bread, had often formed their daily meal at that period.

At length—after the parents had held many a sad conversation together, and the children whispered of trouble, as yet unknown, in store for them—removal was resolved upon, and accordingly they prepared to leave the old place which had been their home so long. That was a melancholy “fitting,” but very soon arranged, for Selwyn finding, at the last, that they owed a few pounds in the neighbourhood, (through some small unavoidable expenses incurred during so much sickness,) would allow nothing to be removed from the premises but a few boxes, containing clothes. Their scanty all of furniture he sold, in order to defray the little debts referred to.

“I will not,” he said, “keep a stick, so long as there is an unpaid sixpence on my conscience.”

CHAPTER IX.

THE "AWAKENING."

In lodgings situated Londonwards, on the extreme border of the parish in which they had lately lived, part of Selwyn's family took shelter, on being once more floated on to the pitiless world. "Part," only, because all the younger ones, saving the child in arms, were, immediately after leaving the Woodhouse, placed at a school,—a school to which their mother took them, with many tears; which was not—so little Alfred dolefully said—at all so "nice" as Anna had described it, when she was trying to reconcile them to the talked-of change; and where a host of cropped-headed little ones, (for the most part clad in a coarse uniform) herded in a great, bare, clean-looking, but ill-odoured, room, and were duly disciplined by a heavy featured woman and her assistants, a gawky lass or two.

To this "school" came, weekly, a few worn, or red-faced, women, relatives of the young fry; and on those visiting-days, Alfred and his sisters never watched in vain for mamma, or Anna, who would appear, pale, but smiling, to clasp them in fond caresses; to cheer by promise of a removal "very soon now;" to please them by the gift of a copper or two, to be expended among the sweets in the cupboard-shop kept by the old lady with the maimed hands; or sometimes by some little comfort, with difficulty spared from the poor table "at home"—but which might as well have been kept there for all the good it did the children, who, owing to varied and extraordinary accidents, vaguely explained, were sure never to cast eyes on their present from the moment it was entrusted to the authorities in charge.

As may be guessed, the little innocents had been carried for temporary shelter to the Workhouse. That particular institution was, at the time, under a remarkably liberal rule, and as certain interest was

secured there by the unfortunate scholar, it befell that a portion of his family was received within the walls, and temporary out-door relief extended to the other, without any inconvenient regulations being enforced, or inquisitive remarks made. Therefore, the reader will please make none, but be glad that Teresa, with a forlorn sort of comfort, could find her younger children saved from absolute want, and the others kept in bread, by means so generally abhorred, and so little thanked. Kept in bread they literally were, for many days. The two eldest boys used to go, after night-fall, to the appointed baker, and, being served with the not light allowance, would bring it home in a large basket, which was carefully covered, to represent clothes from the wash. Those genteel, hungry, threadbare lads would have dropped for shame beneath their load, had their fiction been discovered, and the humiliating truth oozed out.

And now, in this time of accumulated troubles, yet another blow comes to Teresa—her husband falls dangerously ill.

He had been, the day before, to the funeral of his old friend and fellow writer, Warner, who, having, of late years, gone deeper on his downward way, until all his splendid talents were rusted and forgotten, had, one night, died suddenly in his bed. Next morning, the youthful orphan niece, who alone remained to tend or lament him, sent hastily for Selwyn, thinking, poor child, that her uncle was in a fit; but he had died in darkness, alone, and unprepared. Selwyn, wishing to show a last mark of kindness to one so long known, had been among the very few friends who attended the funeral; and he had stood bare-headed, in a hot sun, while the usual prayers were said beside the poor grave. On returning home, he complained of headache, but seemed to attribute it to the morning's exertion, and to naturally depressed spirits.

"Poor Warner! How shockingly sudden it seems," he remarked to Teresa. "I was out with him only four days ago, and now he is buried! So much for that splendid head of his, and all the early promise

which I used to envy, while I admired. Ah, what bright things we resolved upon together, many and many a day! He little thought then, poor fellow, what a wasted life would lie to his account.—This comes of a man once taking to swinish ways!—Well, my dear,” he added, with more gentleness than was usual in his look, “you have had a good deal to bear from me, I am afraid, but you have not had some bad things, and drinking is one. If ever you see me stoop to make a beast of myself, I give you leave to despise me heartily from that hour.”

“I wish, though, you had something reviving to take just now: it might do you good,” said his wife, with an affectionate caress. “Is there anything I can get you, my love? You don’t look well.”

“My head feels as if it were stuck round with pins,” returned Selwyn, whose manly face was remarkably flushed and haggard. “Well—give me a cup of tea, my dear, and then I’ll lie down;—that’s the best thing to do. What have you got there, Paul?”—he asked the lad who, sitting apart, paused in the perusal of some manuscript writing, with a serious, devout look in his eyes.

“Some verses, father,” replied the boy, rising to offer them.—“Clara Warner gave them to George, yesterday. Her uncle had copied them down shortly before his death, and she found them among his papers. And I was thinking,—I was hoping that he had *felt* them.”

“Read them, Paul—I don’t see well, to-day,” said his father; and Paul, who had a very sweet voice, and read well, obeyed.

GONE.

Hark! To the midnight lone,
The church clock speaketh with a solemn tone.
Doth it no more than tell the time?
Sure, from that belfry grey,
In each deep-booming sound which, slow and clear,
Beats, like a measured knell, upon the ear,

A strange voice seems to say,

“Gone—gone—

The hour is gone—the day is gone—

Pray!”

The air is hush’d again,—

But the mute darkness woos to sleep, in vain. .

Oh, Soul, we have slept too long!—

Yea, dream’d the morn away!

In visions false, or feverish un-rest,

Wasting the work-time God hath given, and blest.

Memory turns pale to see

How, like a haunting face,

My youth stares at me, out of gloom profound,

With vacant eyes, dull as the darkness round,

And wailing lips, which say,

“Gone—gone—

The Morn is gone—The Morn is gone—

Pray!”

Woe for those wasted years!

Born bright with smiles, but buried with sad tears!

Their tombs have been prepared

By Time, that grave-man grey.

Soul, we may weep to count each mournful stone,

And read the epitaph engraved thereon

By that stern carver’s brand.

Yet weep not long;—for Hope

Steadfast and calm, beside each head-stone stands,

Gazing on Time, with upward-pointing hands.—

Take we this happy sign:—

Up! let us work, and pray.

Thou, in whose view the hoary ages fly

Swift as a summer’s night, yet whose stern Eye

Doth note each moment lost,—

Let me now live that not one day mis-spent

May rise in Judgment on me, penitent,—

But, in Thy vineyard, Lord,

So, till the sunset, toil,

That every hour a priceless gem may be

To crown the blind brows of Eternity.

Soon after this, Selwyn went to bed, unconscious that he was not to rise again for many weeks. Whether the fever which had lately attacked his household, had crept into his frame, and lurked there, or whether the glare of the sun, on his uncovered head, had been too much for one so excitable, Teresa did not know; but she saw him grow so ill that she summoned a doctor, who looked grave as he examined the sufferer—graver when, in answer to her entreaties, he gave the disorder a name. Her husband was down in the anguish and peril of brain fever; and she, overcome by this new calamity, while in circumstances so extremely necessitous, wrung her hands in dismay. “What would become of him and of them?” she cried, when examination showed her that they just possessed tenpence in the world.

At this juncture, Helena made a proposition which cheered her mother with a very reasonable hope.

“Mamma, why do you not apply to Mr. Massinger for some assistance? Surely he would forget any estrangement, and be very glad to help us. I know he is in town, for I happened to see that he was at some meeting, reported in the paper which papa brought home, yesterday.”

Thankful for the suggestion, Teresa sat down by the side of her now unconscious husband, and wrote confidentially to her kinsman. George, attired as neatly as their poverty permitted, went with the note to the handsome residence of the gentleman addressed; but, alas! he returned with news that Mr. Massinger had indeed been very lately in town, but had now gone—the people hardly knew where, but thought to Paris;—he always came and went, quite unexpectedly; if the letter were left with them, it should be forwarded to him at the first opportunity. The lad did not like to leave his mother's communication without her farther order; and she having, during his absence, been visited by another suggestion, preferred to act upon it before pursuing any correspondence with her wandering kinsman. Accordingly, in the simple and touching words which distress inspires, she wrote to Mr. Deanes, that gentle-

man who had promised to be so good a friend before the estrangement which had occurred at the Woodhouse; and, knowing him to be a man of great worth and kindness, and blest, besides, with ample means, she indulged in hopes of a favourable answer.

The family uttered a fervent "thank God!" when George returned, with the intimation, "Mother, he will come to see you this evening." There was neither compliment nor greeting; but a good deal of ready friendship was contained in that message.

Dusk brought a peal from the muffled knocker; and Teresa, going to the little landing to receive her visitor, found George lighting upstairs a gentleman still young, but already of a comfortable portliness—a gentleman blunt of manner, not polished of speech, and with an expression in his kindling blue eye, which seemed to intimate, that the surest passport to the owner's good graces would be a course of dealing the most sharp-pointed and straightforward. She felt the warning implied by his first quick glance, and, trying to compose her quivering features, curtsied in silence.

"How's your husband, Ma'am?"

She replied that he was very ill; and, interpreting his look at the chamber door near, opened it, that he might enter. Anna, who, with a rough looking woman, was watching near, drew aside the poor curtains of the bed, and his eye softened into serious pity as it rested on the changed humanity within. Low, indeed, a woful sight, is that once intellectual head.—

Close the curtains, child.

The visitor, with ruddy cheek turned blue through a slight shudder, goes with careful, creaking step, from the chamber, and, after softly shutting the door, follows the wife into the sitting-room. There he sits down, to ruffle his short hair and warm head with an expansive handkerchief, and asks—

"What medical advice have you got?"

She mentioned a doctor of some repute in the neighbourhood.

"Very well; but that's not enough. You must have a physician. I'll send one from town. Let's see:

—You haven't a well qualified nurse, have you? It's necessary you should have—so I'll see one comes, with the doctor. I'll do it all, mind; no trouble to you. Now, Ma'am, please tell me exactly how you stand."

Teresa gave him a brief, candid explanation of their affairs, to which he listened musingly, rocking on his stick.

"Well. With respect to the immediate present:—there is a society established for the purpose of assisting people in difficulties like these, and—yes, I shall make interest for you there, and don't doubt you will be helped. You will very likely have a visit from the secretary; just repeat to him what you have told me. It is customary, I believe, to send a sort of form, to fill up with particulars necessary to be known, but as Mr. Grice is unable to do that, you must not object to be questioned a little. Have you never heard of the place? Has Mr. Grice never applied there?"

"No, Sir, my husband is a man of such independence of spirit. He never would receive charity until lately compelled," she replied, unable to restrain a few tears.

"Well, Ma'am. Now, with regard to your two boys, here.—I wish they could be got to do something. What are their ages? Bless me! Ma'am, there are hundreds of boys in London, much younger, earning their own living."

"They are very desirous to be useful, Mr. Deanes, I assure you, and they have been well educated. Their poor father and I have often thought very anxiously over this subject, but he has been lately without influence; and, as for apprenticing them"—

"Bless the woman! I mean some temporary employment—just something which would bring you in a weekly sum, however small. You must not expect them to begin very high, you know, wherever they may get afterwards. ('Oh, no, Sir,' she ejaculated, but inwardly wondering, not without uneasiness, what might he be intending?) I'll tell you what; send 'em both to me, at eleven o'clock to-morrow, and we'll see what can be done. Yes,—that'll be well.—You've two girls, and the baby, here, you say?"

"Oh, yes, Sir, but they are both most useful to me!" she exclaimed, fearful of interference in that quarter; and her motherly arms went forth to clutch the sweet girls, and hold them at home—under any privation, any difficulty, yet, safe at Home. "Helena's time is constantly taken up by the child, and Anna helps me with her poor father, and in every way. I could by no means spare either, Mr. Deanes."

"Well. Now I must go. I shall come again in a day or two. Meanwhile"—he counted down five sovereigns on the shabby table, and signed her to be silent. "Be sure you send those boys to me. I am anxious about them. They are growing, Ma'am; and if you don't get them into the way of earning something for themselves—there's Belly—Belly"—he paused, stroking his portly paunch with a grave and feeling significance.

After the visit of this good friend, the family had lighter hearts. The physician came the same night, and had a lengthened conference with the resident surgeon. When he left, it was with a promise to call again on the following day, and a few kind words which might either encourage, or repress, hope. Seeing her dear husband under the best of medical care, and knowing the excellence of his constitution, Teresa allowed herself favourable anticipations of the result; and was, besides, inexpressibly relieved at the fair turn which had occurred in their temporal difficulties.

In accordance with the wish of Mr. Deanes, her sons waited on him next morning, and returned home with the good news that, through his kind interest, there was every probability that George would be received into a great publishing House, where his acquirements and abilities would be particularly likely to give satisfaction. Paul had not, for the present, been so fortunate, but, as his penmanship was rapid and beautiful, he had obtained a temporary engagement which would bring in some shillings weekly—a return not to be despised, after their late experience. The lads who, though reserved young gentlemen on some points, were eager to work, seemed in high

spirits at this change in their position; and Paul, proud to be first of the two in active employ, set off to business early next day, with his mother's approving kiss, and an air of manliness, which his sisters smiled to see on his slender figure. George, in the course of the week, was received into the House above mentioned, at a salary handsome to begin with, and presently to be increased.

The kind offices of Mr. Deanes did not stop here. He recommended the case in the quarter to which he had referred, and this so urgently, that the secretary proceeded to enquiry without delay. He came without forewarning of any kind, and somewhat abashed the family by introducing himself into their sitting-room, just as they were commencing their simple dinner. The girls, with the ease of ladies, covered up the dishes, and left the stranger with their mother, who was by no means prepossessed by his address or manner of interrogation; and, although (excepting their misfortune at "the Towers,") Teresa had nothing, in the run of their troubled life, to conceal, and could affectionately laud her husband's integrity and industry, she felt, as she told her daughters, like a witness under severe cross-examination, and grew, at last, heated and confused in her visitor's presence.

"Oh, I don't like it! I shall dread another visit!" she said, nervously, when he had left, dry and formal to the last; but, with the present gift of three sovereigns from the funds of the Institute, and an implied promise of substantial assistance. "I wonder if I said anything out of place, or contradictory? I hope, at least, he will give one time to collect oneself, and not come upon us so abruptly again."

"He did that purposely, mamma, you may be sure," remarked Helena. "He wanted to have an idea of our home-doings. Well, it is no disgrace to be taking dinner; and everything is clean, (though shabby enough), that is a comfort."

"We cannot wonder that he should have done so," said Anna. "It is reasonable to suppose that they meet with much deception, and must use every means

to distinguish the real cases from the false. Experience may have made that gentleman suspicious and close."

"Oh, of course, my dear, and I am most grateful for his kind intentions; but, still, it is a hard price to pay for assistance—all that questioning and exposure," sighed her mother.

She felt this more sensibly when contrasted with the behaviour of a titled patron of literature, who, being connected with that Institution, heard of the case, and took so great an interest in it, that he called privately upon the reduced family. He did not roll up in his carriage, nor allow the footman to startle the mean door by a pealing summons, but, simply introducing himself, greeted Teresa with a cordiality and respect which immediately set her at ease. He lingered for some time, interested by the lady-like woman and the charming baby who played on the rug—its sisters having gone out to refresh themselves with a hasty walk; (what a pity! thought the mother, with a little natural regret, for she was proud of their grace and sweetness, and would have liked the approval of those discriminating eyes). When, at length, he left, this good nobleman expressed a hope that he might some day see her husband, (who was then in a heavy sleep), and begging her to accept a trifle towards defraying expenses so numerous, placed in her hands an envelope, which she found to contain two five pound notes.

Days went by, and lighter grew the shadows which had enveloped that home. They received help so generous from the Society, that, what with one incoming and another, they could then have afforded to maintain the absent little ones; but, Teresa, being unwilling to remove them without her husband's knowledge, or to disturb him with their prattle while in lodgings so confined, reluctantly suffered them to remain until he should be able to advise her.

It was longer than she had expected before he did that, although, when he had once turned the critical point, his recovery promised to be rapid. Strange to say, he never seemed to miss his two sons, who were absent all day; never enquired how had she con-

trived for daily necessities since his attack, when he had left her in a state, desperate, indeed; never asked how she got the dainties, expensive as they often were, with which she supplied him. She had to explain all this when he was able to attend, and then he neither approved, nor disapproved, of anything she had done. Nor would he yet take an interest in any question she wished to ask him.

"Don't lay anything on my mind," he whispered. "Don't disturb me about anything whatever. It makes me nervous: let me first get well."

That seemed indeed the only object of the life mercifully spared to him, and to attain it, he left nothing undone. He tranquillized his mind, scrupulously obeyed medical directions, was careful to take regularly the prescribed nourishment; and, being fortunately able to command those careful attentions and comforts so necessary at the time of convalescence, he travelled quickly towards the goal in view. As his strength returned, he seemed to relax something of the restraint he had set himself, and puzzled his wife and daughters by some displays which they, at first, attributed to the state of his weakened nerves. He would lie against his pillows, softly weeping, for an hour or two at a time: and, when alone, would heave sighs, and utter moaning words which evidently came from a mind strongly disturbed. But he ceased when any one entered the room, and, repulsing every kind remark, maintained an invariable silence as to the cause of his emotion.

However, the family were soon enlightened on that point.

One day, the invalid turned abruptly to Helena, who sat at work near, and said,

"Send for Mr. Bonna."

"For whom, papa?" she asked, doubtfully.

"For Mr. Bonna, the rector. Be speedy. Let me have one righteous person near me," was his stern reply;—and she, in dismay, retired.

There was disturbance in the little parlour that morning, while mother and daughters whispered together,

and, perhaps, saw a frightful cloud descending upon them. But there was no help for it—Selwyn's order must be obeyed. Accordingly, the clergyman was sent for, and soon arriving, was closeted with the invalid during a long, mysterious interview.

When once invited into the house, that gentleman became a frequent visitor. It was soon a daily occurrence for the family in the adjoining room (the partition-wall being thin) to overhear him reading, at great length, with impressive utterance; after which, his voice, and that of Selwyn, would rise in prayer and ejaculation, evidently prompted by feelings of the utmost fervour.

Matters went on thus, until Selwyn was strong enough to be removed; and they then left the cramped lodgings for a neat house, partly furnished, in a fine suburb not very distant. Here they were to remain until his re-instated health would permit a further change; and here, when he had recovered from the fatigue of removal, his first action was to write a note, which he carefully sealed, and put into his wife's hands, saying,

"Let it go immediately. I have asked her to come to-morrow."

She had glanced at the superscription, and paled through a variety of feelings.—

"Mrs. Overstein! Annabella! — Good gracious, Selwyn!"

He interrupted her. "I beg you will make no remark."

"But I think it is only reasonable if I wish to know *why* she is coming," said Teresa, ready to break into tears.

"You know, Teresa, that she is an old friend, and that I have been at the point of death. Is not that enough? She is a woman of God, and deserves your highest respect. Remember that, and do not judge her by any of your frivolous ideas."

He would say no more, nor was she inclined to question him, but went away, to wonder and cry. Should she be at home when Mrs. Overstein came? She could not brook this: yet, if she went out, how pointed

it would seem. Suddenly she remembered that the morrow was the day fixed by the authorities for the removal of her young children from their "school," and she felt glad that this duty would keep her from home during most of the day. She took a favourable opportunity of mentioning this to her husband, who made no remark, but seemed satisfied it should be so.

Betimes next morning, appeared a page, with a delicately folded note; and as Selwyn, after reading it, arose, and had himself dressed with unusual care, his household concluded that the visitor was expected.

Towards noon, a well-appointed carriage, with two fine steeds, rolled softly to the door; heavily rang the knocker, lightly clapped the chariot-steps, and the agile footman bowed out a figure such as rarely before, perhaps, had crossed the sunny pavement, and entered that modest portal.

Richly dressed in sheeny black satin, tall beyond feminine height, and with something of a dashing air about her still,—though she had long professedly eschewed all worldly goods and vanities,—Mrs. Overstein differed in appearance from the sedate "pious" lady pictured by the youthful critics now waiting to receive her. She so belied her years that she could scarcely be called elderly, and had been very handsome, as was evidenced by the fine, fair features, and imposing figure, so carefully preserved: but notwithstanding these advantages, she did not command the admiration of the two young ladies, whose perceptions were remarkably quick and true, and who detected, beneath the acquired polish, a certain something in voice and manner which, if defined, might savour of natural vulgarity. She did not allow much time for their politely-veiled scrutiny, but giving each a tightly-gloved hand, cried, without the trouble of a preface,

"Your papa, my dears—take me to your dear papa!"—and, on being introduced into his chamber, she rustled towards him, with eagerness.

"My dear, dear Selwyn! How delighted I was at your request. Why did you not write before? so long

ill without my knowledge! And, dear me! how changed, how very sadly changed you are!"

And gazing on his hollow cheeks and eyes, she drew forth a square of lace for tears, real or ornamental.

"I suppose I am, Annabella, but more changed *within*, I hope," he said, gravely. "How are you? How is Cesarina?"

Some common-place enquiries were continued, and then he said:

"You are very good to come;—but I knew where to find a friend. I want you to be one to me, Annabella. I want your counsel, pious and valuable as I always esteemed it, even in days when I flung such things to the winds."

"You know, Selwyn, that anything which lies in my poor power I shall be most happy to do," she returned, and disposed herself to listen, for his manner was strikingly grave and significant.

"Annabella, I cannot describe to you what I feel *here*," laying his hand on his breast. "My illness has awakened, changed me. Lying in dizziness and anguish, on the point of passing into an awful Eternity, on the point of meeting a strict Judge, I suffered—what is indescribable. How have I served my Maker? A wasted life has been mine,—a hard, hard heart! I look back, and see folly, folly,—nothing but folly. The Lord be merciful to me a sinner!"

He paused,—while she, with head aside, and handsome eyes affectionately fixed on him, listened, as to the eloquence of a favourite preacher.

"But, in His mercy, I have been spared, and now must strive to make atonement for the past. No more wandering for me, I pray and humbly trust. I must simply do what is right: I must unflinchingly rectify what is wrong. Do you *feel* what I am saying, Annabella?"

"Oh, very, very truly," returned the lady, with a sigh sufficiently deep; and he resumed:

"To rectify what is wrong; that is my first duty. Now, there is, alas, in my unfortunate household, a mountain of wrong, which I, careless myself, and

enthralled by many weak considerations, did not perceive, but see plainly now. My children have been brought up in Error—in the doctrines of a false Church.—Woe to me if I do not use every effort to draw them from darkness into the light which has visited me.”

“Oh, you see it at last,—the Lord be praised!” she exclaimed, now roused into earnestness. “I really feared that Antichrist had laid his claws upon you, also, and that you were going into the same gulf: but, thanks be to God, it is not so. Oh, how I feel for you,—how clearly I comprehend your position, at a glance! You must be suffering much in spirit. Ah, Selwyn, you have brought it all on yourself. There was a time,” she added, meltingly, “there *was* a time when I warned, and besought—but—you know: it had to be in vain. Ah, well! let it rest.—But whatever do you mean to do under this difficulty? How accomplish the object which you hint at? Some of the children seem old enough to be obstinate.”

“I fear that:—as you truly intimate, I have let things go on too long. But I must do my best. I think that, by separating the younger ones from the influence of the elder, I may save *them* at least, and perhaps—”

“But their mother, Selwyn? surely of all, *she* is the most to be feared. Are you intending to leave them under *her* influence?”

“She must be silent!” he replied, authoritatively. “I shall propose to her that, if she leaves me to my duty, she shall herself be undisturbed; but, if she does not promise this, faithfully, implicitly,—we separate, and I take the children.”

“Now, my dear Selwyn, you will permit me, I am sure, to express my opinion, since you have taken me into your confidence. Then, I say candidly, do not trust her. Can you reasonably suppose you may trust her? I should grieve much were you made uncomfortable by any domestic change, but still, I do entreat you to consider well, and—forgive the advice—let other, let higher considerations stand first. Ah, my dear

friend, I need not remind you that we are weakness itself,—chaff blown about by the wind—and that often when, in a hard battle, we are gaining the victory, a grain of dust in the eye,—a human feeling hidden from ourselves,—is sufficient to discomfit and shamefully to conquer us.”

This lady owed Mrs. Grice no good-will. To tell tales, she herself, though older than he, had once hoped to captivate Selwyn; but he had married another—and the charming widow was obliged to find solace in his very marked and flattering friendship, and in a hearty dislike of her successful rival.

At her words, Selwyn thoughtfully looked down. Perhaps, deeply in earnest though he was, he felt that he must prepare for a mighty interior conflict if ever he should resolve to part from that chosen and tender wife; and he did not answer till after a pause of some length.

“If ever I find her trying to deceive me, I must take my measures; but I prefer giving her the choice I have mentioned. When you consider, it is her right to have it, Annabella. To be with the young children (as I suppose she will choose,) will prove a powerful incentive to her good behaviour: and you may believe I shall be vigilant in my observations. But it is these elder children, boys and girls both, whom I most mistrust. I fear I shall find them very bigoted, for they have always had every indulgence from me, in going to their chapel, and so forth. Now, my dear Anna, I have formed some plans in which I have been greatly aided by Mr. Bonna, the rector here, who has been a solid friend to me.—Do you know him?”

“Oh, yes. A sweet soul, a man of light.”

“He is a Christian and a scholar—I am fortunate in his friendship. He has advised me strongly to make the separation of the children my first object, and I feel he is right, for, in a body, they might be too many for me. I intend to remove, as soon as I am able, into the country;—they must not all go with me. George has so good a situation with Messrs. ——— and has such fair prospects, that I must leave him to himself, and try

what advice and exhortation will do for him. I don't think that, under the circumstances, more is required of me with regard to him. As for Paul, Mr. Bonna is hopeful about something which will just suit him, and will keep him perpetually under his own eye; so that is very well, so far. You see, the lads can be managed, but what to do about the two elder girls, I am puzzled to determine. I would place them at a strictly religious school, but I cannot afford; and, besides, they are almost too old. No—I thought—in this perplexity, I thought of you. Can you help me, Annabella? In the name of our long friendship, I venture to ask much from you."

"*You* cannot ask *too* much, dear Selwyn, and in a case like this, I am, of course, all eagerness to co-operate with you. My family is small—let one of your daughters come to me. Let me see if I cannot effect a change in her sentiments; or, at least, keep her from the idolatrous practices of her Church."

"The very thing I hoped you would propose. You are a true friend, Anna. In your Christian household, she will see everything to edify her. But, I warn you, you will have to be exceedingly strict with her. I am afraid you undertake a fatiguing task."

"Oh, leave her to *me*," said the lady, confidently. "She shall hear such preachers as must soon awaken her mind to enquiry, and draw her, I trust, out of her papistical darkness. Poor thing! how is she to know better, until taught? Is it one of those girls I saw below? Which?"

"The younger, if you please,—Helena. She has a spirit which needs unrelaxing control, I warn you again."

"Leave her to us. I long to begin the good work. The younger? I am glad it is that one. I noticed she is remarkably like you, in face and expression, which, of course, immediately secured my interest in her—(with a very tender glance.) What will you do with the other? Really, I feel ready to take both of them, only it might not be well for the sisters to be together. What do you think?"

"I don't think it would; and, besides, you have undertaken a charge quite heavy enough, God bless you. Neither could Anna be spared from household duties, until I get other assistance; and, again, she is so mild and tractable, that I hope I shall succeed in convincing her, or, at least, be able to keep her under control without much difficulty. We shall see, on trial. I think we have made very satisfactory arrangements, so far."

"Yes, and you must be very hopeful about it all; and use every means to restore your valuable health, for that is the first thing to be considered. Now, you are tired," seeing him recline, with an exhausted look, in his easy chair. "I will reluctantly go. Of course, I shall soon see you again?"

"I will correspond with you, or call, directly I get out. If you come here again, Annabella, I am afraid it will excite surmises, for, remember, my family, as yet, know nothing of my intentions. All must be kept secret until I begin to act."

"Very prudent; Romanists are so deep, and their priests might easily find means to spoil all your plans. You remarked," she continued, while preparing for departure, "that you purpose removing into the country. I should like to know—but you will tell me all about your prospects next time I have the happiness of seeing you."

"Thank you: I have very fair prospects on every side, and have made some good connections through my friend Bonna. He has interested N—, who, you know, employs none but religious writers, and who is anxious to enter into engagements with me. I am as anxious to begin again, and, by writings worthy of a Christian, atone for the time wasted over foolish and profane literature. May it all be forgiven me! This hand shall perish before it ever again writes a line which is not strictly for the cause of the Lord!"

"I am sure, Selwyn," she murmured, "nothing could exceed the beauty and talent of all your past writings. You have every reason to be proud of them. You look

so faint—I am so shocked to see you,” she added, taking a lingering farewell.

“I shall be strong soon, please God. Good bye, my dear Anna. My affectionate remembrance to Cesarina.”

When the lady had departed, his eldest daughter appeared, with a basin of nicely prepared broth which soon revived his drooping strength. He even condescended to converse.

“You’ve seen Mrs. Overstein, at last, Anna. Don’t you think she is to be admired?”

“Do you mean her appearance, papa? It is certainly very striking.”

“Ah, but she is a good woman,” continued Selwyn, anxious to create respect for his intended coadjutor and, perhaps, to efface an impression which, in spite of himself, she had produced in his mind. In his careless days, Mrs. Overstein had seemed to him a woman of brightly edifying example, and the little homilies which she could very well deliver, had been admired, though laughed aside; but in the newly-risen light of his own fervour, hers showed more dimly,—as he had felt, with a disappointing sensation, more than once during their interview.

“She is a good woman, Anna, and highly esteemed everywhere. Ask the poor what she is. Some of our institutions will miss her liberal gifts, when she goes. A fine, generous creature!”

“That is Mr. Bonna, I think,” here observed Anna, as a knock was heard. “Shall I show him up, papa?”

She did so; and another long conversation ensued in the sick room.

Little did Teresa suspect anything of the undercurrent which was flowing all this time,—flowing softly, but soon to rise around her in strong billows. She, poor thing, returning with her little ones, tired, but thankfully happy to have them again at home, went straight to her husband’s chamber, to make sundry affectionate inquiries, before she thought of resting her weary limbs. She was pleased to find him very kind, though quiet. He even asked for the children, and,

when they were brought to him, greeted them with some cordiality. Perhaps he thought that his projects would be more easily accomplished, if he could obtain his children's confidence; but he ought to have begun that attempt long ago. The little creatures had been so long accustomed to a different rule, that his conciliatory advances only puzzled them; and, watching him with a close and timid attention, they answered his questions in bashful monosyllables. He at length dismissed them, voting them a dull little pack; but at the same time he sighed, and perhaps then, if never before, Selwyn felt that, in domestic life, the arbitrary system is not the most efficient.

"But I *will* be obeyed," he repeated—and felt his power in that respect, at least.

Things were quiet for two or three weeks; then, one Sabbath morning, the storm broke.

The last three Sundays had brought such heavy rains that no one could get to Mass; but this particular day beams fair and sunny, and the young people are all gleeful preparation to go to the worship which they love. Suddenly, from upstairs descends a mandate which changes their cheerful bustle into mute surprise.

"Mamma," says Paul, "father has just called me to his room, and he says no one is to go out to-day."

"What do you say, Paul?" asks his mother, and delays fixing a hat on a fair little head.

She cannot believe it, on the lad's repetition, and goes upstairs expecting to prove there is some mistake. Selwyn, sitting at his desk, does not look up at her entrance, but answers with firm brevity—

"Yes, Teresa, I did send that message. See that it is obeyed."

"Surely, my love,"—

"Teresa, please to leave me. Tell them all, I command them to stay at home to-day. Go. I wish to write. Not a word more!"

She ~~falls~~ sits down, with pallid cheeks, to the expectant group—What can she do, but falteringly repeat the command? Anna and Paul exchange a long look. George, a high-spirited youth, fires up under the restriction.

"What right has even he to keep me from mass? I shall go, as I am bound to do!"

"George, my darling boy," interposes his mother, "I entreat you, obey your father. Don't, don't irritate your father!"

With which words she goes out of the room, unable to look upon them all; and Helena, who, when her brother spoke, had resolutely tied on her bonnet in order to accompany him, now looses the strings from her sweet, flushed face, and hastens after her parent, for she sees that she is weeping.

Now gentle Anna may put away the cloaks of divers sizes, the little hats, with their white and blue ribbons, and lead the children into the parlour, to take them to chapel, as well as she can, by simplified mass prayers and good reading. The two elder lads remain, to listen moodily to the clanging bells, and watch the flocks of gaily dressed people: they murmur together, in natural rebellion of spirit, which is chafed by a feeling of present helplessness. Ah, Selwyn understood those young hearts well, and his plans are carefully laid.

Heavily uncomfortable as was that Sunday morning, the day had to grow darker. About noon, Selwyn again summoned Paul to his study, and gave him a letter for his mother. The lad carried it to her, and she, astonished, began to read, turning white before she had proceeded far. For that letter (intersected with many affectionate expressions, as if he had softened while dealing the hard blow) that letter her husband made the medium of conveying to her his new sentiments, and as many of his projects as he deemed it prudent to explain. She did not then read the whole, but, dropping the paper from her poor, trembling hands, ran upstairs, for the time almost frantic. He had locked his door,—and by no perceptible movement answered her, as she stood, knocking and sobbing, outside.

"My love, open the door. Oh, remember all you promised me. Selwyn, Selwyn! Think of all you once promised me!"

This she vainly repeated, until Anna came up, and prevailed upon her to return below. There all, in tears,

surrounded their beloved mother, and, by their caresses and sympathy, very likely prevented her heart from breaking under a shock so great. In her distress, and now rising indignation,—desirous too of securing their entire sympathy,—she did what she might not have done, if cooler—she suffered George to read aloud the important letter. The poor children wept afresh, and Helena, in alarm and grief, passionately protested against the arrangements concerning herself.

“What! leave you, mamma? leave my darling little Lotty? And go to that woman? Never! Oh, I hate her. I do, Anna. Oh, never, never!”

“Mamma,” said Anna, “let us pray together. There seems no help for us, but prayer may bring it.”

Those good young hearts instinctively responded to this appeal, and Anna uttered a few earnest words to Her whose intercession is powerful against evil. Teresa covered her eyes. Her thoughts had darted to a time in her past life, a time of great need, when she, with trust as spontaneous, had gone to the protection implored by the voices now around her—

Sacred Nemesis, spare the lash.

CHAPTER X.

THE DIVIDED HOUSEHOLD.

Selwyn had prepared his measures so well, and was so effectively aided by zealous friends, that, in the course of the same week, he removed to an abode situated near a most lovely village in a neighbouring county. The spot was well chosen, being at a great distance from any place of Catholic worship—a deprivation to which he had often before subjected his family, though for other reasons: now it was with the fixed and sole view of preventing the possibility of a stolen visit to chapel. Moreover, the curate, a brother of Mr. Bonna, was already imbued with sentiments of friendship and admiration for the “newly awakened” scholar; and, as the neighbourhood happened to enjoy a singularly “pious” reputation, several of the leading families were prepared to share their pastor’s sympathy, and to greet, with encomiums, the gentleman whose conversion, with all its interesting circumstances, was soon food for amiable gossip and many extravagant anecdotes.

These auspices were, more or less, unfavourable for the new comers, who, with heavy hearts, prepared to settle in their country dwelling. Temporal comforts they now had in plenty; for Selwyn, having already made not a little noise in “religious” circles, where his fresh and ardent pen was eagerly expected, had completed several excellent engagements, and secured good interest for the future. Poverty, therefore, was not likely ever to trouble them again: but, still, dark were their prospects,—very poor their chance of domestic peace.

Did the mother accompany her children? She did. In a painful interview with her husband, she gave the promise he required—the promise that, under pain of

a miserable separation, she would never again interfere with the religious control of the household. Selwyn himself was not aware how deep a breath of relief he drew when she consented to this restriction. He still regarded his wife with a clinging attachment, and had she stood inflexibly firm in a refusal to meet his measures, he would very likely have been induced to modify them, however reluctantly, rather than part with her. But she was not assured of this; and taking no counsellor but her own maternal heart, who can wonder at the result? How far she meant to keep her agreement is another question. Oppression begets concealment; and the once simple and fervent Teresa is willing to appease her conscience with promises of what she will do—when she dares.

When she dares,—a suggestive phrase. Henceforth, there will be, in that home, two antagonistic principles constantly at war; the weaker deem it expedient to deceive the stronger by a fair show of submission, and under that cloak, try, with agonized grapple, for the ascendancy which, without frightful cost, cannot be maintained. The wife against the husband, the children against the father—Coercion, like an iron law, over all, gaining nothing, while it seems victorious—what fruits of unhappiness are daily gathered in that divided household! This state of things was almost more than Teresa could bear, and soon wrought a greater change in her spirits and appearance than had been effected by all the difficulties of her past life. Her boys had often caressingly admired the glossiness of her raven hair, and the arch brightness of her eye; but now a faint shade of grey stole, wofully soon, over her head, and that motherly face was oftener full of a haggard anxiety than any other expression. At first she fancied, with a feeling like resignation, that she should not long survive that momentous struggle, with its necessity for daily vigilance and its drain upon strength; but a glance at her children's prospects always gave her a yearning desire to live, and a resolution, for their sakes, to steel her heart—to cast pain behind her—to endure more, if more had to come. To this resolution she received a fresh stimulus by the natural

surmise:—"If anything happens to me, I suppose Mrs. Overstein would soon supplant me." It may be that here she was wrong, and that no flattering arts would ever have induced Selwyn to give another her place,—though he had sometimes said to her: "If anything happens to me, Mr. Bonna and Annabella will be guardians of the children." But, right or wrong, the thought did good to her woman's heart, for it made her doubly covetous of life.

Life,—indeed! how dare she die, so long as one of those young souls was in peril? How clearly rang in her ears the question once put to her by the lips of wise experience, when tenderly warning her of the very possible consequences of a mixed marriage,—“If even one soul be drawn away, what can make atonement?” This question, which she now often repeated, was full of particular bitterness since she heard a remark uttered by her husband in the interview mentioned above. He had been saying, with something of boastful moderation, that although determined to do his duty strictly towards the children, he should never attempt to restrain *her*: she should always be free to follow the practices of her unhappy faith, as he had once promised she should. Promised!—he had promised more—and she, stung by the recollection, gave vent to some cutting reproaches. Selwyn was nettled,—his natural fire not being yet so subdued but that it flared forth at a breath.

“I don't know, Teresa,” he returned, “that *you* have any right to talk, for, to my thinking, you have always been shamefully neglectful of every pious practice enjoined you. I have looked in vain for religious example from *you*.”

It was her due reward for having put him before her duty—for having, on countless occasions, studied his temper, or his wish, when both should have been secondary to the obligations neglected for them; yet the rebuke, coming from him, carried with it a sting almost too sharp. She thought of the piteous cry of Wolsey, “*if I had served my God as faithfully*”—and she echoed it, with remorse as anguished. And now

there went from her heart a feeling which had hitherto dwelt there; the feeling of wifely affection. She had faithfully loved her husband through trials which would, long ago, have been fatal to a common attachment; through trials caused by a capricious and domineering temper, through reverses, sickness, and extreme poverty; but this last blow was too heavy in a tender place, and lingering love irrevocably departed. Well shall it be for Teresa if this trial works in her the effects of its blessed mission,—if it leads her, though late, to that good service which she neglected for one so vain.

Not happier than herself were the children, now forced to live under a system of control strict beyond their anticipations. George was not with them; he had been left in respectable lodgings by his father, who endeavoured to fulfil the parental responsibility by some earnest conversations with the youth, and by providing him with several dangerous books, which he commanded him to read attentively. Nor was Helena at home; she, poor child, having been conveyed, soon after their removal from town, to the care of Mrs. Overstein. It may seem strange that the father saw no cruelty in separating that warm young heart from all it dearly loved, and subjecting it to a most distasteful control, but he had no sympathy with any of his offspring, and was blinded by his "convictions." In his opinion, he opened a claim upon his daughter's gratitude when assuring her that she would have a home replete with comforts, and share, with Miss Overstein, the advantages of a first-rate education.

"Well, that is true, mamma," said Helena, who, at first ill under expectation of the trial, endeavoured to cheer her mother, as the day of parting drew near. "I shall have all Miss Overstein's masters, and therefore a more brilliant finish to my education than I could have at home; and do you know what I mean to do? I will study, day and night,—study with all my powers, and when fit to be a governess, I will leave them, in spite of anything, and take a situation in some Catholic family. I dare say I shall be qualified in a few months, and out of that horrible house. This

thought keeps me up. It does, mamma; it keeps me up," she repeated, sobbing, for all her courage.

The day had come when Mrs. Overstein's luxurious carriage had rolled to the gate, and Helena been hurried from her tearful family into the vehicle, where she had been seen to cast herself down, with hidden face and hands beating the soft white cushions, as if in pain too passionate for endurance. Teresa shed bitter tears while her fancy followed the dear girl to that undesired abode where vigilant, and perhaps cruel, authority would dog her daily ways, forbid the exercises of her priceless faith, try to deaden its lustre by misrepresentation and slander. A lot hard for poor Helena to endure; harder for the mother to picture. Presently, Anna stole upon her melancholy thoughts, with caresses and consolation.

"Cheer up, dear mamma—hope it will not last long. I know Helena: she will do as she has said. She will, indeed."

"Ah, she is too young, yet," said Teresa, despondingly.

"Not in her mind, mamma—that is womanly and firm. Oh, I trust darling Nelly. I trust her courage."

"God grant it may be so," said the mother, somewhat cheered, for she relied upon her eldest daughter's opinions; and then kissing her fondly, thought a great blessing was yet left her.

Not but that Anna had been in some perplexity as to the course she ought to pursue under existing circumstances, and had suffered much at the prospect of a lengthened religious constraint. She had intended to submit her case to proper direction, but in this had been disappointed; for Selwyn, perhaps suspicious of such a design, had exercised so arbitrary a vigilance over the members of his family that they were hurried into the country before it was possible to obtain spiritual advice. Teresa increased her daughter's embarrassment by moving entreaties.

"Stay with me, my child," she said, imploringly; "stay, for the sake of these little ones. Barred away from them as I am, I must be silent, but *you* can make

a thousand opportunities for counteracting anything they will be taught. Do but stay till they are older. Anna, if you leave us, my only hope for them is destroyed."

The unselfish heart of the sister yielded as she looked at the caressing little tribe; and she said, with a sigh,

"I don't know if I do right, but I cannot leave them. If it is wrong, I hope I shall be forgiven."

It needed a generous affection to remain and bear submissively the restrictions which were soon in full force. Morning and evening, all in the house were summoned to prayers and hymn-singing; every Sunday sent regularly to the services at the village church near, and during the rest of that day depressed by a load of pious volumes and tracts, all of fiercely anti-Catholic tendency. Not contented with these measures, Selwyn was wont to assemble the children in his study, and by lengthened explanation, accusation, and denouncement (spiced with broad ridicule, if he were in a merrier mood than usual) endeavour to destroy respect for their Faith, and eradicate from their minds the effects of earlier lessons. Teresa, at first, felt too acutely pained to be present on those occasions; but, on reflection, she made it an invariable rule to remain near, silently at work, and mentally mark down any observation by which she thought it likely the young listeners would be impressed, in order that it might be refuted by Anna immediately afterwards.

Did she find their father's influence slowly supplanting her own in any one of those ductile minds? No; with unspeakable thankfulness, she perceived that worst of pangs would probably be spared her. As if they had sucked in the Faith with her milk, they stood, untouched yet, that dangerous ordeal, and repaid the coercion against which they dared not murmur, by a hearty, unreasoning abhorrence of every person and thing they could style "heretical." Even she was surprised to discover how deeply-rooted were their feelings. The elder children were influenced by esteem and love for their holy creed,—the younger by feel-

ings and example; but the antagonistic element was equally strong in all, even down to the last little toddler, who was one day found beating with her tiny strength, and scolding while she beat, a ponderous volume, ("History of the Spanish Inquisition") from which her father was wont to read aloud with much gusto, and to which she instinctively attributed her mother's tears. Selwyn little thought that many a time when he believed them all to be at church, (for reasons hereafter noticed, he was not long a regular attendant there himself,) one or two of the bigger lads were concealed in some large tree in his garden, and, with faces turned towards the nearest Catholic chapel,—eighteen miles off,—solaced themselves by attending mass in spirit:—as little he thought that those who did go to the distasteful service, seldom heard a word of prayer or sermon, but, conveniently hidden most of the time by the great, deep, detached pew, ventured to say their rosaries, and their own dear prayers out of such books as they had saved from the general conflagration to which their father had early consigned all such "papist rubbish."

But though this cheering hope greatly softened the distress of her situation, Teresa had several never-failing sources of anxiety. She was anxious about Paul, who, though still at home,—through some fortunate disappointment in his father's arrangements,—was liable to removal any day; anxious about Helena; most anxious about George. This youth was accustomed to visit his home every fortnight, and it soon became evident to all, that, although kind and affectionate enough, he was changed—changed from the open-hearted and frank lad whom they remembered. His mother noticed the alteration with a doubtful eye. What had caused it? But it was natural: he was now a man, out in the busy world which frequently rubs off the most amiable and ingenious points in a youth's character, and draws him from that good refuge,—a mother's once respected counsel. This is only what every parent must expect; and she had best, while fondly tending her smiling, rosy, all-dependant nursling,

prepare herself for the general experience. Teresa, though a tender, was a sensible mother, and took the trial with moderate fortitude; but she vaguely felt there was something more to come, and her son's growing estrangement not wholly explained.

By-and-bye, the children began to whisper with shocked faces, George had said this, George had done that; and as she heard their artless remarks, fears,—each one sharp as a thorn,—entered her heart, and rankled there.

Paul could have realised all his mother's apprehensions, had he chosen; one or two conversations with his brother having showed him pretty clearly what they had to dread. But, being unwilling to add to her anxieties, he kept his own counsel on that point.

One Sunday evening, the youths were walking in the garden, waiting for the coach which was to take George to town, when the latter dropped his voice, and said,

"It is only kind to warn you, Paul, so I have to say, 'look out.' Father will have a proposal made about you, this week."

"What is it, George?"

"Oh, you may guess: the old story. Mr. Bonna will be coming here, or writing, in a day or two. He hinted as much to me last Sunday, when I saw him for a few minutes after service."

Paul looked thoughtfully over the fair landscape, and repressed a sigh.

"Bad news, George. But tell me, how came you to be in Mr. Bonna's church?"

His brother looked confused.

"Oh, I happened to be there. But why do you dislike my news? You should think it rather lucky to be taken into a good position, as that is safe to be, where you'll have a chance of making your way forward. Are you not tired of living here, hearing nothing but the birds singing, and droning over your books? What a blessed quiet place it is! Beautiful, though, for the girls. Do you know, I think they are making you into a girl among them," he added, looking from his manly height

upon the delicate lad who, though the same age, barring a few seconds, as himself, seemed much younger.

"I wish, George, you would tell me *why* you went to that church. Once, there were few things which we kept from each other."

At this, George laughed, though uneasily.

"Well, since you make it such a favour, I went to service there, but *why* I went I really prefer not to be asked. How you look! Doubtless you think I'm in great sin."

"Indeed, George, I should have been far from supposing you would have done such a thing. Surely you know"——

"Don't preach to *me*, Paul! Be charitable enough to suppose that I know what I am about. I'll tell you what it is: you are getting some precious strait-laced notions through being shut up here so long. I hope you'll come out, and get rid of them."

"George! If mother heard you!"——

"Mother!" repeated the young gentleman, with a jerk of the head. "Mother is a dear creature, bless her!—but there are some things she has narrow ideas about. In my opinion, religion is all the more engaging, when it does not drag you into such heavy chains which some people think they must wear and be—lost—if they don't. Can't we be allowed—?"

But here the rumbling of the coach being heard, George abruptly left his brother, and marched into the house; while Paul, too much hurt to follow, remained in sad reflection.

That week, Selwyn received a letter from Mr. Bonna, and immediately after perusing it, he summoned Paul to his room. The lad entered with a remarkable look on his face, but silently sat down, at his father's bidding.

"Now, Paul, attend. This is from my friend Bonna, and he tells me that, after making great efforts, he has succeeded in doing something for you. You will now be domiciled in the house of the learned and religious Lord H——;" he named a nobleman noted for furiously intolerant principles. "He wants a librarian

and secretary. In that position, a youth of scholarship, as I am proud to know you are, will have every chance of doing well, and of getting a good footing in society—Christian society—and my mind will be relieved of a great weight on your account. It is a capital thing for you, my boy: better than I had hoped for.”

His son listened with glowing, uneasy eyes, but merely said,

“When would you wish me to go, father?”

“Without any delay but what is quite necessary. But before the matter is finally closed, Lord H— wishes to see you, so I purpose taking you to town to-morrow. Be ready for the early coach. You may go, my lad.”

Paul looked at his parent, with a longing, strange expression in his eloquent eyes, but quitted the room without a word. To speak, he knew would be useless and dangerous; useless—if he had any hope of changing that stern will, based, as it was, on a conscientious principle; dangerous—for the peace of the whole household.

On the stairs he found Teresa lingering, with an unhappy face. She beckoned him down.

“What has he been saying, my love?”

He told her, adding, “Keep up your trust, mother—I do.”

“Lord H—, of all people!” she exclaimed, much distressed. “Why, he is furious against us! You will have to copy the most obnoxious letters and things all day. Oh, Paul!”

“Mother,” he returned, earnest, but composed, “I entreat you to be trustful. Remember, that first project failed, and so may this. Let us wait and see.”

Father and son went to town next morning. Contrary to expectation, they did not return until the following day, for Selwyn, going to see Mrs. Overstein, had missed the night coach, and consequently been detained in town. Paul brought unfavourable news; Lord H— approved his intended secretary, and wished to receive him immediately.

"I think father was very sorry I had to come home, but I told him it would be too hard to leave you all without a word. I am to go to-morrow. Dear mother, do not cry." He flung his arms round her. "I cannot bear to cause your tears. Listen—will you believe me when I say you need have no fear about me? Will you believe it, and be comforted?"

"Don't rely over much on your own strength, dear Paul," remarked Anna, perhaps thinking sadly of George.

"I don't mean that, Anna," he replied with significance, but turned from her enquiring look to cheer his mother. Wishing to divert her mind, he spoke of Helena, whom he had seen privately for a stolen moment, and who sent home all loving and reassuring messages. He described her as greatly improved in her studies, and not apparently unhappy—not now, at least.

"She says that, at first, their efforts at conversion were ardent; but I fancy they must be getting tired of working on such a staunch little Papist. I thought Miss Overstein seemed attached to Nelly. Such a handsome young lady, Anna!"

After answering the numerous questions concerning the dear, absent girl which affection prompted them to ask, he strolled into the garden. There he was joined by his eldest sister, and they walked in silence, which she at length broke by the enquiry—

"Will you not take me into your confidence, brother?"

He looked into her steady eyes, and answered their sweet, penetrating gaze, by pressing her hands.

"Yes, sister, I will. I see you suspect I have formed some resolution; and so I have."

They sat down on a rustic bench under some trailing laburnums. Anna, for years after, never saw such bloomy golden blossoms without seeing also the slender lad who, with fair face aglow, and voice tremulous with deep feeling, then opened his heart to her sympathetic love.

With hand clasped in her's, and arm round her dear

waist, Paul told his sister that he felt a strong call to the religious life. This feeling had been with him for years, and had become a settled resolution since he had watched by the bedside of young Mark Rogers.

"I cannot tell you, Anna, what I thought during some of the conversations I used to have with him. Oh, so beautifully he talked, sometimes,—as if the heaven which he was near entering, dropped some of its clear light into his chastened soul, and let him see and describe things of earth as they really are, when stripped of their false appearances. Then, sister, when he had gone, and I used to sit watching by his cold, cold figure, all the truths that we had often talked about seemed to become so sensibly, so indelibly impressed upon my mind, that I feel confident nothing on earth can ever remove, or even weaken, their blessed effect. I feel so deeply the foolishness of every love but One, the nothingness of every pursuit but One, that I could not go into the world to work for my temporal advancement, even if I were sure of a brilliant fortune immediately. No, no! I cannot waste my life over things of time: I am pledged to those of Eternity. I wish to be a good monk, a useful priest, if God will make me fit." This he said with a reverential air.

"I see, dear Paul, that you feel deeply. Have you ever asked spiritual advice on a point so important?"

"Of course; from Father Clement, when we were at the Woodhouse. He approved, but told me to wait, and pray that God would please signify His Will about me. I was young then, you know; I mean when I first mentioned it to him, for, since I was seven years old, I have always hoped I should enter religion. I have reflected, I have prayed,—and now must act. Anna, I can never accept the situation with Lord H—."

"No, Paul—I thought—I knew that."

"No," said the lad, with kindling indignation in his face, "not if I were without my present hopes, and were to be brought to beggary in consequence, could I earn a penny in service so condemned by my conscience. Oh, how can father think—but he believes he is doing his duty. May God clearly enlighten him, some day."

"Amen," said his sister, earnestly. "But, oh, Paul!" she added, with an involuntary shudder, "how will you act in this great difficulty? Consider all he will be sure to say and do."

"Indeed, I have considered, and am forced to adopt a course which I do not like, but cannot avoid. Father intends me to leave home at noon to-morrow; I must depart privately, before then. I must depart,—and trust to Almighty God for guidance. I will leave a letter for father; but I am afraid he will be beyond soothing, for some time at least. He will never know how sorry I am to displease him; but on this point I can yield nothing to love or fear."

He drew a deep breath; so did she, and, thinking of their mother, murmured her name.

"Ah, beloved mother," repeated Paul, with tears in his eyes. "If I could only have her approval! Ah, if she were free to do it, how fondly she would bless and encourage me! But, don't you see, Anna, to let her know anything of my design, would be the cruellest thing possible, for she must either betray me, or incur father's anger, when— No! Mamma must not be involved, even by a suspicion. Tell her that I said so; and how I longed to confide in her."

"Ah, Paul, I dread the discovery. But that is a cowardly thought. You must do your duty. But where will you go? You have no money—have you friends?"

"Dear sister, will you feel hurt if I ask, had you better know? You might be questioned, and placed in a painful predicament. Still, if you wish, I will tell you this also."

"No," she sighed, "perhaps you had better not; yet how can I help the greatest anxiety about you, going off as you do in such a manner?"

Oppressed by sisterly anxiety, she shed tears. The youth, in his generous trustfulness, made light of that uneasiness.

"Where is your courage, Anna? You will find I shall be well protected. Do you remember the miracle of St. Felix and the spider, which we used to read about with

such wonder, when children? Think of a dozen interventions in favour of those who have gone into suffering for conscience' sake; and be sure, that, though I am insignificant enough, and don't expect any extraordinary succour, I shall be quite safe, and well guided. Cheer up, dear sister, have trust—have courage! Do not give way to uneasiness, nor allow mother to do so. Tell her, I will write to you directly I am able."

They talked a little longer; and then Anna went into the house, where, while watching her mother sorrowfully preparing Paul's box for his supposed departure on the morrow—how she longed to tell her all!—the thoughtful sister took an opportunity to make up a convenient bundle of clothes and food for the wanderer's immediate necessities.

He went at early dawn next day. Teresa lay awake, for anxiety on his account had banished sleep; she lay awake, but little thought that the steps of her departing son were stealing over the gravel beneath her window: she lay awake, as her own tender mother may have done when she once arose for a flight,—how often remembered, with tears, while watching the dawn slowly break, after many a sleepless night!

CHAPTER XI.

PROSELYTISM.

"I certainly do not see, my dear Selwyn, that, as yet, we have made a very happy progress; but I hope conviction will still come, and lift her out of her delusion. Our exertions will be, I trust, like the drops upon the stone, which impress at last; certainly she does seem like a stone in her stubbornness—but that all Romanists are."

Such, after a long talk about Helena, was the summing up of Mrs. Overstein's account; to which Selwyn

sternly listened, and begged her to be doubly strict in her control of the wilful girl.

Mrs. Overstein had once professed herself delighted to perceive, in the daughter, the likeness of the father; but perhaps she found that resemblance more faithful than she had quite expected. Helena, though very tender when her affections were touched, was of a mind unusually firm, intelligent, and self-reliant; and the circumstances in which she was placed did the natural work of years by drawing out the strong points in her character, to her own safety, but to the surprise and dissatisfaction of her new friends. Those good people, interested in the peculiar case, and extremely anxious to proselytise, had subjected her to a course of treatment which must have subdued a spirit more timid. Not only was she debarred every practice of her holy religion, with a watchfulness which, she hoped, was too minute to last, but also, at all times and seasons, carried to the divers churches approved by her protectors, and forced to sit, with aching head and heart, through sermons, lectures, and debates, all eloquent with earnestness, and all bearing on the same ever-favourite subject, the follies and iniquities of "Rome."

It happened just at that time, the papal court had taken a certain measure which England comprehended not, and therefore reviled. Up rose the unwise, headstrong, high-swalling, but swift-subsiding sea of popular prejudice, with a cry loud and empty as the wind: it was echoed in pulpits, with solemn warning, and pointed quotation; on platforms, by hot-faced men in black, who, with furious denunciations, nightly worked themselves and their equally ignorant audience into a fever of zealous indignation; and prolonged by every individual who had a heart to resent and a tongue to declaim against the "aggression" so threatening to England's religious safety. In the handsome drawing-room of Mrs. Overstein this theme was of daily discussion; and ladies who, probably, had never opened a Catholic book, or spoken familiarly to a papist in their lives, forgot the usual topics of their sweetly pious chit-

chat to expatiate on the blunders of Her who shall never go astray, and to deplore, often with soft tears, the stupid delusion of so many thousands who lie in Her chains.

By no small effort did Helena contrive to practise patience on these occasions. At first, she used to listen to the babble with cheeks reddening indignantly, until she would break into tears, or abruptly quit the room; but in time she attained more self-possession. Now she had full opportunities of perceiving the great ignorance of Catholic tenets which disgraces most Protestants—an ignorance so surprising that she was at a loss to know how it could possess persons who were called “educated,” and, above all, how those under its dominion could presume to sit in loud judgment on things about which they obviously knew nothing whatever. For instance, she had not been in the house more than a few hours when a lady visitor, after eyeing her for some moments with much compassion, enquired gravely, “Do your people believe in the Holy Spirit, child?” Another, after sitting with her in very kind and agreeable conversation, let slip her object by saying,

“Now, my dear, I see you are possessed of great intelligence, and therefore capable of judging for yourself, so you will—you *will* oblige me by opening this Book.” She produced a small, velvet-cased volume. “Let me *implore* you to take it away, and examine it. You never, never will remain a—Romanist—if you will but open this Book. Do not be afraid of it, my dear: it is *The Bible*,” seeing that her listener declined accepting it, with a civil bow.

“A revered acquaintance of mine, ma’am. We never had less than four copies of the Holy Book at home. And what is more,” continued Helena, quietly, “*we* alone have the true version—the Translation from the Latin Vulgate, from the original Greek and Hebrew languages, in which the Testaments were first written, as you may know.”

Perhaps she did not know—at all events, she listened with as long a stare as if Helena were speaking in the

tongues referred to. The young girl could not refrain from adding ;

"I wish, ma'am,—as we are on this subject—you would prove to me, how you come to know there ever was a Bible written, or that this is it? Trace it back, if you please. You will be forced to take the testimony of the Catholic Church, who faithfully preserved the Sacred Writings during the long ages before printing was known, and who is the means of that treasured volume being in your hands this minute. If you ever say again that She forbids its circulation, or present it to a Catholic as a thing never seen before, I am obliged to warn you, ma'am, that you will offer a direct insult to Truth."

On another occasion, Helena was much amused by some remarks which reached her ears. A large party of morning visitors were lamenting the defection of a gentleman—formerly of some note among them—who had occasioned a considerable stir in his neighbourhood by embracing Catholicity.

"Are you speaking of poor Mr. —? Oh, I have heard such dreadful news about him," cried a lady—an intimation which immediately secured a dozen attentive ears.

"It certainly does seem incredible that such a thing could be allowed in our days,—but then, one may expect *anything* to occur in such a place as that Babylon. You know that Mr. — went to Rome, soon after his unhappy change. Well, while there, he fell under the Pope's displeasure, and—will you believe it, my dear Mrs. Overstein?—they have put out his eyes—put out both his eyes, with a red-hot iron, I do assure you."

A shudder ran through the circle of listeners, (not one of whom doubted the report,) and many curious surmises were hazarded as to the cause and effect of this punishment.

"Poor de-luyed man!" said one wealthy old dame, who rejoiced in wobbling tones of great richness. "Oh that the Lo-ord would now open the eyes of his soul, and show him the ar-bomination of the ways in which he hath chosen to wa-alk."

"Ah, I wish it might be so, dear Mrs. Bickerby," sighed the narrator. "But so far from that being the case, I hear he has taken his penance—as they call it—very meekly."

"Poor wretch!—perhaps he's afraid of worse!" exclaimed Mrs. Overstein.

The simple fact is, that the gentleman under discussion, had, during a brief visit to Rome, suffered rather severely from ophthalmia, a disease which frequently attacks English visitors. As Helena happened to know this, and also had since seen him in London, with his visual organs in very good condition, she took some pleasure in making the company acquainted with the truth; and so, it is to be hoped, somewhat disturbed the course of a ridiculous, but well received, slander.

Many things as absurd as the above had the poor child to hear, her presence being, at first, invariably required in the reception-rooms, perhaps in the hope that some of the sentiments which flowed from the lips of visitors, male and female, might influence her thoughtful mind. But this happy idea proved futile. Miss Helena, besides being remarkably well-informed, had something of her father's thunder on the tip of her tongue; and when a side-long appeal was made to her "convictions," or an apparently innocent question asked, she would sometimes answer according to the movement of her "spirit," and generally with marked effect. She gained one great benefit from this.—Finding it dangerous to meddle with what could prick so well, and perhaps secretly suspicious of being quizzed by their youthful observer, the company soon left the little lady to herself, and at length all, Mrs. Overstein included, felt more at ease when she was absent from the apartment.

It must be understood that these remarks refer chiefly to the ladies and the younger men of Mrs. Overstein's acquaintance, who, possessing, at the best but a slender stock of general knowledge, were no match for one who knew her points well, and had, when provoked to speak, her heart in every sentence. But there some-

times came others, whom, notwithstanding their prejudices, she was obliged to esteem; men admirable for their learning and sincere goodness, who looked with kind pity on the nice girl, a "victim to the false principles of her education," and would have rejoiced over her "conversion," but were too courteous to pursue a controversy which they saw she disliked. One, especially, she was wont to regard with respectful interest. He was rector of that parish, a talented, dignified man, with benevolent, mild countenance, and voice of soft kindness; and he always came with a group of fair little daughters. These children, sitting near him, used to watch Helena with undeviating attention, and an expression on their artless faces which plainly showed with what aversion they had been trained to regard anything papistical. She, reluctant to continue a sort of Ogress, and goodness knows what, in their childish eyes, often attempted such advances as were likely to attract them—but in vain. Their father—being, notwithstanding his piety, very bigoted—had imbued their young minds with intolerant sentiments, and nothing could destroy the effects of that careful teaching. Has he no forewarning of the time when the breath of true Faith will touch his soul, and, powerful as the trumpet's blast against the towers of Jericho, shake down the walls of prejudice, hitherto stern and inaccessible? when he would thankfully give his life to unteach what he has taught, and will try, with pathetic urgency, to win to the lately-found Truth those beloved young daughters, who, repulsing his efforts with horror, will mourn over their once venerated parent as over one who, in his old age, has come to dotage and disgrace? He foresees nothing of all this; yet it is to be.

In that household there was one person—Miss Overstein—in whom Helena took an interest. This feeling was quietly checked during the first weeks of their acquaintance, for the young lady referred to having naturally imbibed some strange notions of Catholic manners and customs, seemed disposed to keep at a discreet distance. Ice however could scarcely have re-

tained frigidity if brought into contact with Helena, so reserve gradually gave place to kind companionship. "I cannot quite make her out," was Helena's mental remark, after some scrutiny of her new friend. "I fancy there is something in her, though; in spite of her looks." For Miss Overstein, a model of the most languid loveliness, seemed to go through the drooping days as if Life were a scene to be slept out, and she irresponsible for any one of its great duties. "I am beginning to make her out," thought Helena, some time later. "There is a good deal in her, if she could only be roused. She is very different from her mamma." The quick girl had soon discovered the shallowness of that lady, and mentally said, "She is all on the surface: her very manœuvring is transparent. Can I not see that she would like to convert me as much to please papa and vex mamma, as for any more worthy motive? Before I came here, I thought I should fear her; but she is no doughty foe."

Encouraged by this reflection, she renewed her stock of patience, and with fresh ardour endeavoured to secure those means by which she hoped to escape from her present position. In this steadily-pursued object she was assisted by circumstances, even beyond her expectation. Miss Overstein, though arrived at a womanly age, had not yet "finished" her education, and was daily attended by a staff of masters whose visits ceased to be idle on the advent of the earnest Helena.

On the day following Selwyn's visit to Mrs. Overstein, the young ladies happened to be alone together—Helena, with Italian book in hand, thinking pensively of home, which the face of her dear brother Paul, seen for a few hasty moments, had brought vividly to her affectionate mind. At the moment, her brave spirit was somewhat dashed, for her mother's lot seemed very hard, and the future of the younger members of the family perilous and uncertain. While reflecting, she heard a heavy sigh from Miss Overstein, and glancing at that young lady, who reclined on a luxurious ottoman, with more weariness on her beautiful features than had

lately been expressed there, she could not forbear asking,

“What is it, Cesarina?”

“Nothing, Helena—never mind me. Heigho! what a useless sort of life it is!”

“Yours? I must say I have often thought that of it, too,” said Helena, with a smile.

Miss Overstein turned her head, to look at her companion with soft, listening eyes; and after a pause, enquired,

“How can I change it? I wish I could; but, in my position, there seems nothing required of me—nothing to be done.”

“Don’t give way to that notion, Cesarina. Every one in the world has something to do, and something to answer for, if they do it not. But what makes you all at once thoughtful on this point?”

“‘Why stand ye all the day idle?’” was Miss Overstein’s reply. She had no occasion to say more, for Helena instinctively followed the train of thought caused by those words—words which she had more than once ventured, half smiling, half reproachful, to repeat, when her companion was possessed by a fit of listlessness more prolonged than usual. In truth, to her, whose home education had been widely different, it had long been matter of surprise how time could be constantly, irremediably lost, with so little self-reproach or care. It must be said, in Miss Overstein’s favour, that Nelly’s remarks on the subject were the most sensible and pointed which had ever been addressed to her, and that when they struck at the dormant, though very fine, powers of her neglected mind, she corresponded to the touch with a candour and attention which promised well.

“What can I do?” resumed this young lady, after another pause. “I suppose my position does oblige me to unusual idleness. I did not make it, but was born to it, that is one consolation. You know how the days come and go, Nelly. I go often to church, it is true, and at one time I thought I would visit the poor regularly, and I did; but it is needless for me to instruct them, even in simple things, when others can do

it so much better than I can, and when I know the good creatures stand bobbing and assenting, in expectation of what I may be about to give them, rather than for any thing else. So I send them charity, instead of dispensing it in person. I do a little needlework, you say, but how little! I wonder if I clothe three little creatures in six months! A gift is of more service than all my work, and it leaves me idle, as before, you see."

Helena had not lived with her so long without having opportunities of knowing that her gifts were generous and frequent. She came to sit near the reclining lady, who was considering the matter with the air of one who tries to discover a puzzle. "Ah," thought the young girl, "if this dear creature were one of us—if she had those interests and occupations which a Catholic may find set in the daily way of life, she would have little need to sigh over duties unknown and hours without profit!" She was not free to express her thoughts, however; therefore said, with a good-natured wish to cheer,

"Take courage, Cesarina. To know our deficiencies is the first step towards repairing them. At least, you are not really more idle than many ladies of your acquaintance, who try to kill time by employing almost every hour of their lives in visiting, tattling—you know the round of their resources—you have often censured it. Yours is indolence, my dear, I agree," she added, laughingly, "but, unlike theirs, it has no active mischief in it."

"Now, Helena, you are throwing me a very negative sort of comfort, and you know it. Well, I do not spend much time in dressing, or visiting, I own; perhaps because both require so much exertion! Yet, no, not for that reason, either.—I really do not care for such things; they seem worth nothing. The truth is, I have just opened my eyes to see I have been spoiled. That is the truth, Nelly."

"Not quite, Cesarina, or you would not feel as you do now. I have great hopes that soon,"—she paused, for a small white rosary had slid from her lace stomacher,

and dropped at Miss Overstein's feet. This was the last Catholic relic she possessed, and so valued by her, that she coloured with feeling, and exclaimed,

"I hope you will not mention it!"

"You know, Helena," replied the other, quietly, "that I have never taken any open part in religious differences, and I don't intend to do so. Let me look, however. What do you call it? A Rosary? Of what use is it?"

"Ah, Cesarina, of such use, and so dear a help to prayer that I, for one, would not give it up for as many pearls as there are beads on this little string! Don't be shocked, nor fancy there is anything of sorcery or dark superstition at work! All is capable of very simple explanation, had I but the power to give it. If you will, for a few moments, just forget all that you, doubtless, have heard against this sweet devotion—all those charges of 'vain repetition,' 'senseless mummary,' and so on, I will try, in a poor way, to show you what a Catholic really thinks upon this point."

"I can have no reasonable objection to listen, Nelly."

"Then, look here, Cesarina. In the first place, you see this Chaplet is divided into five tens, or decades, of beads, with a larger bead between each ten. On each of these larger beads, we say one 'Our Father,' on each of these ten, we say one 'Hail Mary,' finishing, on this separating bead, with one 'Glory be to the Father.' Understand, these beads are simply designed to assist our memory, and show us, by the touch as we lightly hold them, when the due number of prayers have been said. This they do without disturbing the mind—for, Cesarina, while we repeat those prayers, we are accustomed to meditate on some holy events—'Mysteries,' we call them—referring chiefly to our Lord's earthly Life—which truly this devotion of the Rosary helps us to honour. Protestants little know what a round of holy Mysteries a Catholic is threading—what familiar pictures from the mortal Life of the World's Redeemer and of His humble Mother rise up

before the mind's eye while the hand is travelling from the beginning to the end of this much reviled string!

"The entire Rosary consists of Fifteen points of Meditation, classed thus:—five joyful mysteries, five sorrowful, and five glorious. The five joyful have to do with part of our Divine Lord's Life before He began His public Ministry. They commemorate—1st, the very subject of that picture," said Helena, breaking off to point to a fine print of the "Annunciation." "The holy virgin looks beautifully humble—does she not? And when we try to realise *what* was the object of that Angel's descent—the Incarnation of the long-expected Messiah, the Hope of His people—we have food for deep reflection, have we not? I noticed you, this morning, pondering very gravely before that print, Cesarina. Had you then repeated one 'Our Father,' ten 'Hail Maries,' and the Doxology, you would have said the first decade of our Rosary! Well—the Second Mystery commemorates the Virgin's Visitation to her cousin, St. Elizabeth. The Third, our Redeemer's birth at Bethlehem. The Fourth, His Presentation, when an infant of eight days old, in the Temple. And the Fifth, the Finding Him in the Temple after that painful absence of three days, during which His parents 'sought' Him 'sorrowing.' You see, in these five joyful Mysteries, we watch, humbly and prayerfully, our blessed Lord's earthly course, from the Incarnation until He was twelve years old. Do you see anything objectionable so far?"

"Proceed, Nelly."

"This forms one of the three parts into which the Rosary is divided. After these five joyful, we commemorate five sorrowful, Mysteries—indeed sorrowful, for they refer to our Saviour's Sacred Passion. Beginning with His Prayer and wonderful Agony in the Garden, we proceed to meditation on His Scourging, His Crowning with thorns, His weary carriage of the Cross to Calvary—finally, His Crucifixion. Here are five Mysteries, truly, leading us from one point of that bitter Passion to another, until we stand, reverent and grieving, beneath the Cross on which hangs the dead Jesus

—the Immolated Lamb of God, whom our sins have put to death. Ah, who can meditate too often, too profoundly, on these ‘points’!

“I have numbered five joyful and five sorrowful events. There yet remain five glorious. These are—1. The Resurrection of our victorious Lord from the grave. 2. His triumphant Ascension from Mount Olivet. 3. The Descent of the Holy Ghost on the expectant band of believers in that ‘upper chamber.’ 4. The Assumption of our Lady. 5. Her Coronation as Queen of the Heavenly Kingdom. You, with your Protestant views, may not admire the last two points (though a Catholic has reason to love them); but have you anything to object to in the others? Frankly, now, Cesarina, does it not strike you that frequent use of the Rosary is calculated to lead to a very close and loving intimacy with the earthly life of our Saviour?”

“I can understand your custom of meditating on those points you have described; and I think, of course, such Meditations are highly beneficial—for you or for us. But I do not see why you cannot reflect quite as well without saying all those ‘Hail Mariés,’ meanwhile.”

“Of course, Cesarina, we can meditate without using the beads, and we do so; but you know there are more ways of praying than one. I am only speaking, just now, of this particular way. When Catholics kneel to say the Rosary, we know that we are about to commence a devotion very honourable to our Lady; and we make such frequent use of *Her* prayer—the ‘Hail Mary’—throughout, because it closely refers to that great event, the Incarnation of our Lord, through which, and because of which, she became the favoured creature she is. That prayer, Cesarina, begins with the Angel’s salutation to her—‘HAIL MARY, FULL OF GRACE. THE LORD IS WITH THEE. BLESSED ART THOU AMONG WOMEN.’ Did he not use those words? Look in your Bible for them; they stand there, clear and true. And may we not safely repeat the words which an ARCH-ANGEL, fresh from heaven’s glory, charged with a mission from the Most High, utters to that chosen and

blessed creature, about to become the vessel in which the Incarnate Saviour is pleased to dwell? The same strain was continued by the holy Elizabeth, when Mary went to visit her. She cries, while she was '*filled with the HOLY GHOST,*' '*Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?*' Oh, Cesarina! the words uttered by an Archangel—uttered also by Elizabeth, at the moment of inspiration, '*speaking with a loud voice,*' and '*filled with the Holy Ghost,*' those very words, Protestants decline to use, and blame us bitterly for using! But perhaps you would like to hear the rest of the prayer. '*Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.*' This second part was added by our Church, ages ago, and has been dear to thousands of saints—must ever be dear to a Catholic's heart. We ask our Lady to *pray* for us, sinners that we are; in making that confession, we also acknowledge her sinlessness—her power of intercession with her Divine Son. Whom can we reasonably suppose to be so dear to His Sacred Heart as His chosen Mother? Who so likely to plead efficaciously on behalf of us sinners here below? But do not fall into the great mistake of imagining that we make prayer to her a substitute for prayer to God. That would be the grossest of misconceptions. The Almighty has a primary, an unalienable claim upon the homage of His creatures, and whoso would venture to slight that claim, or to offer to Mary the superior honour due to Him, must be either mad or blasphemous. Fair as she is, she is only a creature. All the beauty, all the grace, of which He has declared her to be '*full,*' is His free gift. She could merit nothing of it herself."

"Helena," said her listener, "you need not be at such pains to explain your notion about Mary. I think I quite understand the ground on which you Catholics place her. I can imagine—when you have once persuaded yourselves that your belief in the intercession of saints and angels is not a mistake—I can imagine that you

go with particular affection and trust to so very holy a being as Mary certainly was."

"And how can you prove that belief of ours to be a mistake, Cesarina? As regards Angels, you cannot read the Scriptures without seeing how frequently they were messengers of the Almighty to our earth, and how evidently they are able to sympathise with mortals. Do you remember those words of our Saviour—' See that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always see the Face of my Father' ? And in Hebrews, first chapter, I think, is this remarkable verse, ' The angels are all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation.' In Luke xv. chap., 10 verse, occurs those well-known words, ' There shall be joy before the angels of God over one sinner doing penance.' I once got by heart a beautiful verse in the prophet Zach.—the first chapter: ' The Angel of the Lord answered, and said, O Lord of Hosts, how long wilt Thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, with which thou hast been angry these three-score and ten years? And the Lord answered the angel that talked with me, good words and comfortable words.' What do these quotations mean, if not angelic sympathy, and power of intercession for us mortals? The same, we believe, to be true of the saints. Lazarus, in glory, was petitioned by the unhappy Dives for aid. The Apostle St. Matthew says ' the saints are as the angels of God in heaven,' (in the twenty-second chapter, if I remember rightly.) And you know in the Book of Revelations, the Four-and-Twenty Elders have ' golden vials, full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints.' I don't know whether or not you are aware that Luther agrees in our doctrine on this point; and bade his followers by no means ' omit to call upon the Blessed Virgin and Saints, that they may intercede for them.' After all, what does this invocation of the Blessed mean? Simply, that we remind them to do for us what they did for their fellow-creatures, during their mortal life—intercede for us. All Christians are bound to pray for each other, even while

on earth. Besides, no Catholic, strictly speaking, is *obliged* to invoke the saints. A person may belong to the Catholic Church without ever doing so; but who would voluntarily miss a practice so consoling, so 'good and profitable?' Not I, indeed! I want all the help I can get!"

"I like to hear you talk, Nelly. Not that I agree with you, but I like your earnestness. I wish I could feel as much interest over anything in this world of ours," sighed Miss Overstein. The conversation then dropped.

It may be here observed that Cesarina kept her promise, and Nelly her Rosary. Certainly, had the mistress of the mansion known of the little incident referred to above, she would have thought of the accursed Thing in the tents of Israel, and have cast beads and appendages to the fire.

Sad news must have come to Mrs. Overstein a day or two later. After a lengthened visit from Mr. Bonna, she was left in a state of sighs and disturbance. The emotion, bubbling within, soon boiled up and overflowed for the sympathy of the lady who was her reduced relative and mild "companion;"—and afterwards, it may be remarked, for that of half-a-dozen condoling visitors who called in the course of the morning.

"Only to think of it! Who could ever have foreseen such a thing?" said Mrs. Overstein, shaking her lofty head in grief and indignation. "Poor Selwyn! poor, dear, disappointed soul! Ah, but it might all have been expected. I foretold it long ago. He may look for nothing else from that woman," for thus she was wont to designate Teresa, "and her children. They'll make him sup sorrow yet, every one of them. Witness that I say it, Selina."

"Mercy, me! what has happened, my dear?" asked that gentlest of confidantes.

"Happened? Enough to break his heart! Mr. Bonna has been here, telling me that after all his trouble to get Lord H— to receive that son of his, that second lad,—the wicked youth has flown in his father's face,

and gone off—run away—gone to be a monk. Think of it !”

“Mercy, me !” says Selina, shuddering to think of it ; for, in her simple ideas, a monk and a monster were terms synonymous.

“And left his father a letter—a hypocritical letter—to tell him so. No doubt his monks wrote it for him. They are leagued together all over the world. The Lord preserve us from them !”

“But what is Mr. Grice doing, my dear, that he does not get his lad back ? Why not take the law, and get him back ?”

“Where will he find him, Selina ? He is very likely half way to the Pope by this time. And what good can he do the disobedient youth, who has come out in such colours ? No. Let him go his perverse way. I shall write to Selwyn, and advise it. Let him—oh, pretty news we have of your brother Paul !”

This was addressed to Helena, who entered at that unlucky moment, and who, pausing in natural surprise, begged to be told what had happened.

“Happened !” repeated Mrs. Overstein once more, and “told the tale” in words of increasing warmth ; for she was one of those uncontrolled beings who must work off inward excitement through heated cheeks and tongue, and finally seek coolness in a rain of tears.

To her quick sentences Helena listened, thinking it discreet not to question, but very anxious on her dear brother’s account. There was nothing more to be learned, however, when Mrs. Overstein’s voice broke into sobs ; and thus warned of the rising storm, Nelly escaped to her chamber. After many painful surmises about Paul and her mother, she was inexpressibly comforted that evening, by a visit from George, to whom Teresa, with a parent’s consideration, had written on the subject, anxious to let her daughter receive the clear, unprejudiced account of it all. Although they were not allowed to converse alone, George spoke plainly, assuring her that their mother was not uneasy about Paul, who, she supposed had resources at hand which he could not prudently

mention, and also that their father's heavy wrath had passed by her, whom he perceived to be quite innocent of aiding and abetting the runaway.

"I think he fancied that *I* had a hand in the matter," said George, "so he wrote to Bonna, who called on me direct—but, bless my heart! I knew nothing of it. Master Paul kept his own counsel very well."

"I wonder you did not see papa himself."

"He is not well enough—he has had a day's illness, I hear, through this affair. You know he soon feels the effects of any excitement, since he had that bad fever. I don't think Paul should have served poor father such a trick," added George, who probably had no fellow-feeling for his brother in the matter.

"I am sure, George, he deeply regretted it; but what could he do when so driven? Consider!"

"Oh, he might have managed by other means: or have had patience, for the present. It couldn't have killed him. For my part—"

But his sister's rebuking look interrupted the sentence. Once, not long ago, this youth would have been first of the family to march, even to martyrdom, for the honour of his faith. What had come to him? thought Helena, sorrowfully.

Teresa, unwilling to give them pain, had not told her children in town that, although her husband's anger had been diverted from herself, it had fallen upon Anna with such violence as almost to cause her expulsion from the paternal roof. But he had stopped short of that extreme; for, keenly alive, of late, to his duties as a parent, he scrupled to cast a girl so attractive on the unsafe world, and had, at present, no secure protection to which he could consign her. Therefore she remained at home; but was threatened with removal at the first opportunity, and kept in stern disgrace, which her father seemed resolved never to mitigate.

And now another cloud shaded Helena's life until Mrs. Overstein, by mere dint of talking and bemoaning, had made the subject of stale interest to herself and friends. During those days of trial, Helena conducted herself with a forbearance which evinced inherent

dignity of mind, and, it may be added, more practical Christianity than was displayed by any member of that very religious household. Returning, to the thousand littlenesses which attacked her, only unaffected and calm civility, she went through each day with her young face as sweet, though graver, than usual; but under this moderation lay heavy unhappiness, and a passionate resolution to free herself from it all as soon as possible. Let it be remarked that Miss Overstein appeared to take no part in that petty persecution, and behaved with much amiability in a rather awkward position.

That is a long lane which has no end; says the old proverb. Helena reached the turning-point in the disagreeable road which she was destined to travel—and she reached it much sooner than could have been anticipated.

She observed, one morning, that the ladies were unusually interested by an announcement made by one of the domestics; mother and daughter whispered together, and then, rustling away, were absent a long time. During that interval, Helena, happening to be on the wide stairs, saw Miss Overstein coming out of the room appropriated for the reception of most favoured visitors, and paused to admire the young lady's extreme beauty. Her pale cheeks were flushed, her dark eyes, generally full of too languid a softness, were beamy and smiling, her entire countenance irradiated by some joyful interior emotion. She, engrossed with her thoughts, swept lightly past, without perceiving Helena, who, however, was but a yard distant; and the latter, hearing a masculine voice proceeding from the parlour, and the ring of Mrs. Overstein's blandest laugh, deemed it well to retreat, and amused herself with her own conclusions.

In the course of the evening, she perceived, from observations which passed between the two elder ladies, that the morning's visitor was Mr. Massinger; that he had just returned from Italy, and was coming to dinner on the morrow. "Mr. Massinger—mamma's Bernard!" thought Helena, but, having learned caution of late,

she refrained from betraying any knowledge of the gentleman.

She saw him next morning, and, by the description she had often heard, easily recognised the friend of her mother's youthful days. She knew the story of his early perversion, and of his faithful affection for her beautiful aunt Mary, and as the tale was calculated to engage the sympathies of a heart like Helena's, she regarded him with peculiar interest.

"He seems a perfect gentleman. What a handsome face—but how faded it is! He looks unhappy. What a lonely life he must have led all these years! He cannot be less than thirty-seven now, I think." The object of these kind thoughts attracted her lingering gaze—and she unconsciously pursued her scrutiny until she met Mr. Massinger's glance, and saw him start violently. That girlish face with its keen, serious eyes, might have been a ghostly memory to him, for he glanced again, with an expression which astonished her, and then asked Mrs. Overstein, in a hurried whisper, who she was? The lady, who had not noticed this bye-play, took the question as a rebuke for her discourtesy, and coloured. She had suffered Helena to be some minutes in the room without offering her the civility of an introduction.

"Dear me! I forgot you had not seen her before. Helena, I hope you will excuse me," she said; and performed the ceremony in due style.

Helena fancied he was paler afterwards, but as he merely bowed, without seeming disposed to address her, she drew aside, and while apparently occupied by a dozen little trifles, could not withhold her quiet observations.

"How strange it seems for *our* Mr. Massinger to be here, and evidently on terms of intimacy. Does he admire Miss Overstein, I wonder? Any one must. If you are going to forget aunt Mary, go your ways, Mr. Bernard: I care no more for you! Ah, Cesarina, I see, I see,"—continued the little lady, whose bright eyes certainly saw much, but not all.

For they did not see that, since Miss Overstein's

childhood, the mother and daughter had pursued Mr. Massinger with one nicely-veiled but engrossing object—that of securing him for the younger lady—and to attain it had spared no trouble, no time, not one of those arts by which feminine resolution is wont to attack the vanity of foolish man, and almost invariably with success. They had followed him abroad; they had accompanied him home, (always, need it be said? by the happiest accident in the world); they had plied the daintiest correspondence, and, with the sweetest patience, had endured the caprices of temper which made him no amiable companion. That angling was slow work; yet on the bank stood the two ladies, rod in hand, for they knew the story of his early attachment, and had patience with what, they thought, must one day pass. Mrs. Overstein coveted his wealth and alliance; her daughter, to do her justice, his heart—for Cesarina, in her girlish days, had had an Ideal, and it bore this gentleman's name. As womanly years brought more clearness of perception, she had begun to waken from her dream, perhaps to feel ashamed of the part she had played in it; but still she lingered, loth to part with a delusion which had been dear, and half believing a hundred little whispers which Hope still breathed. Yesterday, he had shown an unusual sign of favour, having come straight to them, after a brief stay at Rome; and Miss Overstein's animated countenance attested clearly that it needed but a slight exertion on his part to re-open the gates closing upon him, and, perhaps, to stir into cheerful life the languor which wasted her days. On that occasion her mother's vivacious hopes were high, and she had expressed them in a manner natural to her.

"Just look as you do now, for his next visit or two, and he is at your feet, my dear," she said, viewing her child's brightened loveliness with pleasure. "You see he could not stay in Rome, after all—must come back—must come to somebody, in high hurry. No wonder, no wonder, indeed! Where would he find such another?" And so on, with sundry smiles; though it is much to be doubted if Mr. Massinger's return was

occasioned by anything but habitual restlessness, and, perhaps, a fancy to be made much of by women so flattering and attractive.

Despite her mamma's counsel, Cesarina does not look to-day as she did yesterday. Whether something in Bernard's behaviour has piqued her, or contact with Helena awakened lady-like instincts which have hitherto been dormant, her manner is characterised by pensive reserve, and she gives much more attention to her young friend than to him. To Mrs. Overstein's great dissatisfaction, the gentleman left early, without promising soon to repeat his visit.

"Dear! how changeable he is!" she exclaimed. "You hardly know how to take the man. I think he grows worse."

"Let him rest, mamma," said her daughter, with a little quivering of the mouth. "It is evident he does not care for either of us. I will let him trouble me, at least, no more."

"Oh, nonsense, child. You are depressed just now. But, after all, it is only his way. There, there! He'll come round soon, you will see."

But several days elapsed, and though Mr. Massinger was still in town—she took care to ascertain that fact—he did not seek their society again. Mrs. Overstein grew very uneasy.

"I wonder what can be the reason," she said, opening her over-burthened mind to her usual confidante. "It is very extraordinary. Nothing occurred to offend him, the other day, that I can think of. I should like to write him a little pretty note, just sllly to get to know—but here is Cesarina positively averse to that, and is not willing to talk about the matter at all. I can't make it out, I'm sure."

Here Selina gave so suggestive a little cough, that her protectress paused to look at her.

"Can *you* imagine any cause for his strange behaviour? Speak plainly, I beg you, Selina."

That quiet lady, busy with her own private observations, after the wont of quiet people, had noticed some things which had escaped the blunter perception of her

relative, and perhaps was not far from the mark when she replied,

"Why, my dear, I did not like to mention it, and I may be wrong: of course, it is a ve-wy ve-wy unpleasant thing for me to say, but I think I did notice something which disturbed Mr. Massinger greatly."

"Well? do speak out," said Mrs. Overstein, ready to cry at such a mishap.

"My dear Annabella, remember, I may be wrong, but it seemed to me—I noticed purposely, and it seemed to me—that he was disturbed through Helena being here. *Indeed*, I think so. Did you observe—"

"Why, what nonsense, Selina. What has the child to do with him? He didn't even know her name."

"That is true, and it puzzles me; yet I cannot help keeping my impression. I was going to say, did you observe how struck he was when he first saw her? Well, he was, ve-wy much so. And frequently, during that evening, I saw him glancing at her, though he would not meet her eye. He left early, you recollect, and did not say when he would come again. My dear Annabella, there is some mystery in it, for I do believe he has a fancy about Helena; whether a fancy of love or dislike, I don't know. It is my firm opinion he will not come near the house again while *she* is in it."

"Why, how you talk! You had better make out he has fallen in love with her. Do. You had better put her before my Cesarina—a little insignificant creature!" cried Mrs. Overstein, excitedly.

But her fears were awakened, and she could not rest until she had travelled, with her companion, over every hour of that particular day, backwards and forwards, examining and commenting, until scarcely a look or word was left unquestioned, and a web of uneasy suspicion woven from it all.

"Humph! a very pretty thing indeed! A fine turn for things to take after all our—Where's Cesarina? I want to know what she thinks of it. Where is she, I say? Send her to me directly."

To her daughter she, with volubility, stated their surmises. Miss Overstein listened quietly.

"It may be as you think, mamma; but even if Helena be, in some unknown way, the cause of it all, I don't see how we can help it."

"You take the matter very coolly, Cesarina, upon my word!"

"I must study my peace, mamma."

"Study fiddlesticks! I cannot understand you. But I can tell you this; if you don't make some effort, you will lose him entirely through your inanity and coolness. I suppose you will see that child stand in your light, and not so much as lift up your head?"

Her daughter looked wan.

"Mother what would you have? I entreat you, let me go the way I feel to be right. For the future, I shall behave very differently to Mr. Massinger. If he wants me, let him seek me. But I don't think he does. No. I think we have been mistaken."

"You are a silly, changeable, affected child."

"And, mother," continued the younger lady, erect, though pale, "I hope you will not let this affair bring any vexation to Helena. I like her companionship. I value it. If there is to be a question of choosing—you know what I mean—" she spoke quickly, "I choose *her*. She has taught me much that is good, and will teach me more."

"Well, I am sure! She had better teach you her papistrie, and to worship her bad images and things."

This was nothing more than the exclamation of an irritated woman, whose tongue outran her meaning, and was known to be absurd while uttered; but Miss Overstein seemed to take it differently, and, facing her parent, said, with some emphasis,

"I know this; Nelly's faith has taught her much which I cannot help admiring; and I think that you, mamma, help to slander a religion which you have never yet examined."

With that, her patience being exhausted, she passed, handsome and flushed, from the room, and Mrs. Over-

stein, who had heard her with a wild and frightened look, melted immediately into a flood of tears.

Real tears this time, and Selina, who hastened to support and soothe, had more than she could manage in that storm of excited feelings. Her own daughter to speak so to her! Her own child to uphold Romanism! It had come to something indeed! Nay, who knew but that the Beast already had his claws upon her? This came through having that young papist in the house: they were all alike—a sly, dangerous, mysterious set.

“Get her gone—get her gone: I’ve had enough of her! She has disgusted the foolish girl with her best prospects—but that I’m not so much afraid of, for Mr. Massinger will come round again when that little creature’s gone. I am not at all afraid on *that* score,” nervously repeated the lady, telling an untruth. “It is my child’s soul, her precious belief that I am alarmed for. The little viper! She shall go back to her father, for harbour her under my roof any longer, I cannot. Oh, Selina, I am to be pitied. This—*this* is the return for all my kindness and continual exertions. I shall never get a word of thanks, you will see. But it always was so: if ever I come across that woman, or her children, I am sure to get the worst of it. Oh, it is a hard, a thankless task to have to do with a Romanist.”

Thus she lamented; and then, sending the surprised Helena a mandate to prepare for immediate departure, she sat down to write to her dear Selwyn in explanation of measures so precipitate.

—“I assure you I have spared *no pains*, and have supplied her with instructions which must, before now, have convinced any mind less wofully stubborn; but all in vain, for she remains wilful as ever, and I fear that the *ill-advised*, the *unhappy influences* of her *earlier education* have been too *deplorably strong* to be ever counteracted. I would still have had patience with her (for *whose sake*, my dearest friend, I need not say) and indeed would never have been willing to cease my undertaking (hoping that the blessing of the Lord would one day find it) had it not been for a discovery which fills me with dismay. I find, that so far from me

succeeding with her, *she* has been attempting, in the *most underhand way*, to proselytize in my own household, and has actually succeeded in inclining my daughter—if not others also—in favour of her pernicious principles. Under these circumstances, I have but one plain duty to perform, and, deeply as I lament our disappointment, truly, most truly, as I sympathise with your anxious feelings, I cannot do otherwise than send the *dangerous girl* back to you, which I do this morning, and hope, my dearest Selwyn, that you will not disapprove a step which nothing but the strictest necessity," &c., &c.

This letter was put into Helena's hands—(Mrs. Overstein would not see her)—and herself into a coach, after an affectionate parting with Cesarina, who looked highly displeased at it all, but said little. And thus suddenly was the work of conversion broken up, and Helena returned to the dear home which she pictured, while rolling swiftly towards it, with a mixture of fondness and pain, and maybe a strong dash of anxiety as the question kept recurring to her—

"What ever will papa say?"

CHAPTER XII.

THE LETTERS.

There is the postman's ring. Every one is familiar with the town postman's knock, but the ring of the country news-bringer is a different thing, and is waited for, in the balmy morning, with a pleasing twitter of expectation which prevents us from settling to the day's duties until that first event is over, be it to our satisfaction or disappointment. He is late this morning—ah, we are to have no letters. But hark! a step is in the quiet lane—a plodding step, unlike the brisk trot of the town official. There is the peal of the musical-toned

bell at the side-gate ; and, peeping through the hall door, we see our worthy old friend, with familiar grey coat and umbrella, standing, in a shower, beneath the arch of blooming blush-roses, briar and jessamine so deliciously fragrant in the summer rain.

"There is the postman's ring !" Alfred, now the eldest boy at home, starts up, and anticipating the maid, runs down the short gravel-path to the gate. He brings in three damp letters.

"One for you, Anna : these two are for father. Well, what an elegant scribe to be sure !"

The letters, (one an awkward-looking missive with large superscription,) he carries up to his father's study, and Teresa comes to ask her daughter is her letter from Helena, who has not written for some time.

"No—oh, mamma ! it is from Paul. With an enclosure for *you*." Both read eagerly.

Since his departure, Paul had written once before this, but, fearful of giving his father the power to pursue or annoy him, he had expressed himself guardedly, and not named his whereabouts, yet assured his friends that he was under good care, and likely soon to be set in the road which he so eagerly wished to travel. Now, having learned that his apprehensions might safely be dismissed (for Selwyn, after the first storm of displeasure, had resolved to leave the boy to his "stubborn ways," and their consequences,) he wrote without reserve, and ventured to give them information hitherto withheld.

* * — "Do you remember, sister, the good Abbot who used sometimes to visit the monastery near the Woodhouse, and who noticed us all so kindly ? To *me* he was particularly kind, (why, I do not know) and once, when we were alone in the sacristy, he called me to him, and, with his hand on my hand, asked me what I meant to do with myself when I was older. I could not help telling him, as I had often told Father Clement, that I hoped, above and before all things, to be a religious, a priest. He seemed to expect that reply, and then said, so kindly and earnestly—'If you continue in this disposition, my child, and if you find

any difficulties in your way, as you may do, then communicate with me. If I can be of service to you, I will.' I never forgot those words, and when the time of difficulty did come, *he* was my hope, the only earthly friend I could trust. When I left home, I came straight to him, confident that, if he could not assist, he would advise me—and how good, how fatherly he has been during all this time of delay and uncertainty, I cannot describe. Nor can I tell you what alternations of hope and fear I have had until this morning, when it has been decided that I am to be received by his community; and here I am, dear sister, with the holy habit of religion newly put on my unworthy shoulders, writing to beg you all to thank our Lord for a favour so great, and to pray that I may go well through my noviciate. Under Him, I owe my present happiness to Rev. Father Abbot, to whom I can never be sufficiently grateful. I have found that he knows our father well, having been, in youth, a valued friend of his. He is writing to him by this post, in the hope of mediating between him and me; for I should feel lighter and very thankful if his anger were likely to be removed from *me*. Day and night, I shall pray that father may one day see the Truth as we see it; for, oh, Anna, sincere and strong as are his religious feelings, and powerful his talents, he would be of bright example if grace did but lead him into our Church."——

In this, the youth was right. When Selwyn, by the agency of a mortal peril, had once been aroused to truths so long unregarded, he had started from his apathy with a remorse which was piercing, with convictions as permanent as they were deep. Thenceforward, that was an "awakened" soul—a soul which never again could be won to sleep, for any length of time, by the soft murmurs of worldly indulgence or of sloth; never forget the solemn voice that had once startled its dull ears with a teaching full of significance so tremendous. But though the time of slumber was past, there succeeded another danger, to a mind like that of Selwyn equally as great—a danger born of lofty intellectual superiority, which, forbidding the entrance of

Humility, with her thousand strong and fructifying graces, threatened miserably to mar the work begun by mercy. Had he been visited, at that period, by the gift of the true Faith, he would have found his safe-guard in the wisely-strict discipline to which Catholics submit; but, alas! blinded by a cloud of almost inaccessible prejudices, he never asked for the needful grace, and, uninvited, it did not enter. Thus unhappily missing the Rock on which he could have leaned, he cast about elsewhere for a holding-place, but, like a bark seeking to anchor on loose sand, he cast about in vain. His learning and penetration could not fail to show him the errors of every man-made creed which he successively examined; and, at length, partly disdainful of one and all, partly instigated by a secret unconquerable impatience of even religious control, he gave up the fatiguing search, and lay drifting, betwixt light and darkness, on that sea which is ever restless with doubt, insecurity, and distress.

For all his religion, Selwyn was a most unhappy man. Finding little comfort in the present, sometimes, in dreadful moments of despondency, no hope in the future, and food for grievous repentance in the past, his deeply devotional feelings were marked by a gloomy sternness which gradually coloured the whole tissue of his life. He would spend hours in tears, bemoaning his former transgressions, and in composing prayers which rolled like thunder over the heads of the youthful family, when assembled at morning and evening worship. His writings were marked by the same tone. The atrocity of the creature's rebellion and ingratitude, with the awful ways of Divine Retribution, here and hereafter, were subjects on which he expatiated with powerful and rousing eloquence; while the blessed truths of Love, Patience, and pursuing Mercy could neither deeply touch his heart, nor long engage his pen.

Teresa has finished her son's letter, but before she can thankfully comment upon it, Selwyn,—whose step has been heard pacing overhead, after his wont when excited—calls her to his room, and placing in her hands one of the letters lately received, asks her what

does she think of it? It bears the postmark of the village nearest her old home, the Grange, and is directed, in a series of rambling steps, "To mister s. Grise, westill, Hurts." The contents, in rough and difficult caligraphy, are these:—

Honrd sur

i rites a Few lines in Hast not free to say Mor but a wummun's eer a Dyng and will you cum In hast it is Anna morgan witch rites and think mister grise as bin Ronged and sends my luv and Doaty to missis Grise and all babes or it may bee too Lat and hops for you to Cum in hast so No more at this Time from yours Humbel servt

Anna morgan (widder)

p.s. this is the nest day and she is wurse can not speke and am hoppin for you

anna Morgan (widder)

"Anna Morgan! why, it must be Nanny—the good soul who was such a friend to me when we left the "Towers," cried Teresa. She turned the epistle to look again at the postmark. "And she must have returned to her former home. How very extraordinary it is!"

They were lost in conjectures for some instants.

"What shall you do, Selwyn?"

He stopped in his walk, and said decisively,

"I shall go. Some poor woman is at the point of death, and may not depart easily unless she sees me. They are strangers to us, and it is a great way," he murmured, more dubiously. "However, I shall go. 'Wronged;' what can it mean? Come, my dear, put me up just what is necessary. I shall catch the coach if we are speedy."

So saying, he began to gather up the papers which littered his desk, and she noticed that he put away, under lock and key, the other letter which he had received by the same post. As he did so, he caught her glance, and remarked, significantly,

"*This* I shall attend to when I return."

Perceiving she was not likely to learn more on that

point, she sighed, and went to make the few preparations for his journey.

Those were so soon completed that when, half-an-hour later, the morning coach rattled to the gates, Selwyn was in the porch, carpet-bag in hand. Two or three of the children, peeping and waiting, never forgot that stern, manly figure, whose every gesture was authority, standing beneath wet roses and honeysuckle. Anna, lingering in the side-parlour, was looking at him too, and, moved by a dutiful impulse, came timidly before his instantly-averted eyes. She had not received the commonest remark from her father since the day of Paul's departure, some months ago.

"Papa," she said, "*you are going a long journey. I wish you would speak to me before you go.*"

The meek eyes, full of feeling, and simple appeal seemed to touch him, for he looked at her rather kindly, and put out his hand.

"Good-bye, Anna. Well—be a good girl."

Words which afterwards she was glad to remember, for they seemed to imply a restoration to as much favour as she generally received from him.

Selwyn has given his wife a few injunctions, and is gone; and the house which he rules so strictly seems to have received a current of free air and sunshine, though the rain falls outside. The children make merry with an affectation of unruliness; while Teresa, happy in a few hours' perfect liberty, looks on, amused at their conceits, and once more utters the dear, motherly laugh which has been unheard so long.

Thus cheerfully passes the day; and when all assemble in the parlour for the afternoon meal, there is chatter and merriment, augmented by the interesting discovery that Sarah,—resolving, it seems, to make the most of holiday time—has brought in a pile of hot cakes with the tea. Hot, fragrant cakes—what youthful eyes can be unmoved by the sight? Not these, for they brighten and laugh; and Sarah, gratified with their praise, makes a private intention not to give master warning, as she yesterday determined, but to stay with missus and them dear children.

"Is that a knock, Sarah?" says her mistress. "It sounded at the back door. I hope you have not left the gate open to-day?"

"I'm afraid I did, Ma'am," returns the maid, lingering as she speaks; for it is a country house, and ugly visitors have come more than once.

"Here, Sarah, don't you be afraid. I'll go with you," says Alfred, valiantly; and, boy-like, snatching a stick from the hall, he starts off in answer to the summons, now softly repeated.

Nothing frightful is to be found in the kitchen porch, but a youthful face and figure, which Alfred shouts to see, and rushes to salute. It is Helena, who, growing apprehensive as she approached the house, preferred to dismiss the coach at a short distance, and finding the premises open, had stolen round to commence tactics before presenting herself to her father's unexpectant sight.

"Hush, dear," she whispers. "Dear Alfred! where's papa just now?"

"Oh, he's out. All right!" cries her brother. "Hurra! Mother, who's come, do you think?"

"Why, my darling girl!"

And Helena flies into those wide-open arms, and may rest there, for never elsewhere will she find a refuge more faithful and fond.

"I can't be converted, mamma. I'm a failure," says the saucy girl, looking up to laugh. "But I will soon tell you all about it. Dear Anna! oh, my darlings!"

She is breathless for some seconds, the centre of a loving and rejoicing group.

"Where's Lotty? Where's my baby? How she has grown! Why, she knows me after all this time! Look, mamma, she knows me!"

Which that small favourite did, as she proved vehemently with her fat, caressing little arms, and gleeful babble.

After this, Helena, with flushed cheeks, disarranged shawl, and general manner somewhat hysterical, is escorted to the parlour by a clinging crowd, whose demonstrative affection is with difficulty restrained by

the mother's gentle admonitions. She, removing her daughter's upper garments, and smoothing her bright hair, bids her not talk until she is refreshed, yet is herself eager to learn everything, and fondly hangs on each accent of the clear young voice, which the home circle has missed so much, and her maternal ear often craved with a torture of yearning.

Happier than she has been for a weary time is Teresa, on seeing her dear girl returned from so hard an ordeal,—returned in safety, and testifying by every remark how esteemed and deeply rooted is her holy Faith. It was a visible reward to the poor mother for so much early instruction; a sensible encouragement, coming in the midst of fears and trials. True, she now had, while anticipating her husband's return, many an uneasy thought on this new score, and the letter which Helena had brought (her "character," the child called it) she put away on his desk, with a longing look at the envelope—for what hard things might it not contain to exasperate him against the innocent bearer? But still, all could be borne—all, cried her thankful heart, since the sharpest bitterness was spared her. If Nelly had been drawn away—as she might have been—if one of those young creatures were drawn away—as they yet might be—what could ever make atonement? a question which was constantly in her soul, while she watched them listening to their father's prejudiced teachings, or going to the village church. Now joy to her ear were Helena's fervent attestations, her description of certain things she had lately experienced, even her playful mimicry. Moreover, Teresa, being nothing more than woman, could not forget that during all her married life Selwyn had held up Mrs. Overstein as a model of every perfection, sometimes hinting at a contrast with distinctness sufficiently marked to humble and wound her; therefore, when her daughter, mischievous and elated, gave sundry particulars for her amusement, she listened with a feeling like triumph, and held up her hands in laughter on beholding the tinsel decorations of the much lauded paragon. Why, where was Selwyn's taste? Where his penetration? How this woman, showy, meretricious,

vulgar, had teased her! She should be wiser, had it to come over again, indeed! And Cesarina, too, that younger perfection, could she compete with *her* charming girls?

"I like Cesarina, mamma," here Nelly said. "I rather admire her, not for her beauty,—though that is striking,—but because there is a nice feeling and liberality in her character. She has a heart, and ladylike instincts, too, when you come to know her."

"Oh! indeed, my dear!"

"Yes. Poor Cesarina, she has been sadly misplaced. Ah, if she had been with you, darling mamma, all these years! As for the tuition of such"—

"Now, Nelly!" said her eldest sister, rebukingly. "Your tongue has a little satire on it to-night. Don't you think you are rather uncharitable?"

"Am I? I suppose I have learned the trick of it! Thank you, dear, for 'wholesome correction.' But how novel to be told to take care of one's neighbour, instead of,—there, I really won't begin again. Is that the bell for night prayers? How sweet to say our own dear prayers once more! Read them, Anna; and I will take papa's place, and pray for his conversion," she added, laughing, but in sad earnest, too.

They gathered together, and, for the first time in that house, family worship was a delight, and words of Catholic faith and love dared to come from the heart to the lips. They knelt long, as if loth to rise. Their father had often complained that they evidently came without relish to prayer; but had he been among them at that moment, he might have learned a lesson of some significance.

Two or three days passed, yet brought Teresa no news from her husband. She was not surprised, for this was after his wont; but when patient waiting still obtained no tidings, she, considering the peculiarity of the circumstances under which he had left home, began to feel uneasiness.

"Perhaps he is pursuing some enquiries, mamma," observed Anna, always her mother's gentle counsellor. "Or he may have had to go elsewhere: a dozen things

may have happened to detain him. However, if we do not hear anything by to-morrow's post, suppose, mamma, you communicate with George, and get him to follow papa? He could easily obtain a holiday; and papa could not be displeased, could he?"

Her mother looked relieved.

"I certainly will think of that, my love; I wonder the idea did not strike me."

"I suppose papa will be very near the Grange. Should you not like to see the old place again?"

"Eh! my dear, perhaps I should not know it. The railroad is there now, and many new features must have appeared, and old ones been removed. Time—time! it alters everything," murmured Teresa.

A face which had graced that old house seemed at her side now, and, her thoughts linked to the past by its smile, she stood pondering on her sister Mary—on her love, her apparently disappointed lot, and wondering whether she had changed much from the sweet creature so well remembered. Listen, Teresa, there is something else to remind you of old days; a song often heard from the lips of that dear sister.

"It is Nelly singing," remarked Anna, when the girlish tones came ringing through the open window near which she and her mother stood.

BRIGHT SKIES.

Beam on, bright skies! The spring time, with a blessing,

On the wide land has softly come to rest,
And matron Earth, in smiles her sweet face dressing,
Bares the young flowers which sleep upon her breast.

Bright skies, beam on.

Oh, fairest skies! a happy spell is glowing
In the blue depths of your celestial zone,
And, like a lovely melody, is throwing
O'er human hearts, a magic of its own.

Bright skies, beam on.

Light, in young eyes, your dancing rays of gladness,
Gay as those shed upon the blooming earth;
In graver hearts, opprest by care or sadness,
Bring some fair feeling to a gracious birth.
Bright skies, beam on.

And oh, sweet skies! if, through your spell refining,
Guilt's brooding soul should catch a purer tone,
Or, through Grief's tears, a ray of hope break shining,
No seraph's smile were brighter than your own!
Beam on, beam on.*

As the song concluded, the maid-servant entered the room.

"A gentleman, Ma'am, wants to see you."

"A gentleman, Sarah? Did he not send his name?"

"No, Ma'am. He is an old gentleman; a clergyman, I think. He said nothing, only that he wishes to see you."

An instinctive feeling turned Teresa's cheeks more wan than usual, and made her bid Anna come with her. The visitor, in the parlour below, was standing in deep thought, from which he roused to give them a long, steady look as they entered. There was about him an air of the old days Teresa had been recalling: the figure, still upright as a dart, the face mildly venerable beneath thin, silvery locks, were familiar to her memory, and could puzzle it only for a moment. She trembled, and faintly said,

"Oh, father!"

Father Lawrence advanced, and greeted her very kindly; but she did not notice what he had said.

"You have come to tell me about my husband. Where is my husband?" she repeated, in a hushed way—and saw by his face that she was right, and that he brought solemn news.

* This Ballad is now the Copyright of Messrs Addison and Co., with whose obliging consent it is inserted.—(The Author.)

- “I have a great deal to tell you, but child, pray.
• Think of God, and His blessed will.”

The priest took the chair which the pale Anna gave him; and, holding both her trembling hands in his smooth, warm palms, gently told the wife—but let us go softly out, and leave those shocked hearts to prayer.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ENQUIRY AND THE ANSWER.

Selwyn, travelling quickly, and occupied by his thoughts, met with none but ordinary incidents, and in due time drew near the place of his destination. He then shook off his abstraction to look about him, but recognized few objects once familiar, so changed was the entire locality. The Grange, to his surprise, had vanished from the face of the land, and a railroad, (which, in its infant projection, had ruined Mr. Crossly, but now, under happier auspices, was in active operation,) ran over the site of the old family house, and, perhaps, over the very spot where he had wooed the gentle Teresa. Skirting the park palings of Mr. Massinger's estate for a good distance, the train darted towards the yet rural village of T——, and in a few minutes had deposited some of its passengers on the little platform, and torn off again on its journey northwards.

Selwyn, climbing the narrow wooden stairs, emerged upon the village street, and, on making enquiry, was directed to the abode of Mrs. Morgan, which lay nearly a mile forward on the road. He soon reached it, a neat dwelling, standing a little off the rural highway, and half hidden by clustering trees. The door of the outer room stood open, and when his step sounded on the bricked garden-path, a woman looked out, and came hastily forward. In the comely face, though touched by time, and now lined by anxiety and watch-

ing, he recognized Nanny, who knew him immediately.

"Oh, Mr. Grice, I'm so glad you're come, sir!" she said, beginning to cry. "I've bin wond'ring would you come. You'll excuse not coming into the house, sir, and sit here till we've talked a bit."

She dusted, with her apron, the seat of the large porch before the cottage door, and then stood in evident flurry and discomfiture.

"I was wond'ring would you come, sir," she repeated.

"Why, how could I do otherwise than come, after the letter you sent me? It has caused me some anxiety, and I hope you did not write it without reasonable grounds."

He paused, but she, nervously busy with her apron strings, looked warm, and was silent.

"Come, my good creature, tell me plainly what is it all about? Have you changed your opinion? Or perhaps the woman you spoke of, is dead?"

"No, sir, she be not; she's up there, sleeping," returned Nanny, signing to a small lattice-window overlooking the leafy porch in which they conversed. "Truth is, Mr. Grice, I'm all in a puzzlement, and sometimes I'm feared I've brought you such a weary way for nothing, and other times I thinks, no—if I hadn't wrote him, I'd do't now. That's just how it is, sir, and I've done 't for the best, anyhow."

"Very well," said Selwyn, with remarkable moderation. "Understand, that, in any case, I shall not be annoyed, nor blame *you*, so make yourself easy. And now, explain exactly every circumstance, and leave conclusions to me. In the first place, who is this sick woman?"

"This is how it is, sir, (thanking you for your kindness, I'm sure.) She—" indicating, with reverted thumb, the window overhead, whenever she named the sufferer, "is my husband's mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Morgan. My husband that was, sir, for I've lost him this four yeer, woe's me! A good husband he was—barring one thing—and happy we'd ha' lived, but for one thing—and grieved I was to lose him, poor dear"

He was took off, quite sudden, four year gone, in the cottage down by B—— where your good lady and the dear chil'ren was with me. Hoping they're well, I'm sure, sir, and you'll pardin me that I didn't ask after them yet."

"They are all well," he said, with signs of growing impatience. "When will you get to the point?"

"I beg pardon, Mr. Grice, but I must go my own rounds, or I can't git on, nor you onderstand how it is, as you ought to. As I was saying, my husband, he was took off, and lone he left me, with the lad, though not to say intirely without means, for he was a saving man, and a kind heart he was, poor dear. Well, his mother, when she come to hear it, she softened wonderfully. There'd always bin a sort of coolness since he married me, because I'm not of her religion, sir, and she'd always tried to make a difference betwixt my husband and me about it, which made him draw away from her, to keep peace among us. Well, she softened down; and she writes to me, making all manners of promises about the lad: (she'd always had a fondness for him since he was a babe,) offering she'd 'prentice him, what wouldn't she do for him, if I'd come back, and bring him to settle nigh her. So I thought and thought, and it seemed for his good, seeing I'd no power to do much for him down at B—— 'cept he'd take to the sea, which is a hard life, and a rough, and I didn't like it for him at all. So I come, sir: I brought him to the village here, believing her promises, you see. And I'm tiring your patience, I know, but I can't git on quick, try as I will.——"

"Now, Mr. Grice, after we'd bin here awhile, I sees into her mind. I sees that she had the hope of drawing him from his Church to her'n, for the sake of all she'd do for him. She had tried *that* since he was born, one way or other, and now she thought she had a fine chance; she did. She has a hard old heart, and I say it. Wasn't it a crafty—but I forgot sir: you're not of our faith, I think," said Nanny, hesitating.

"No, thank God, I'm not," replied Selwyn, sternly. "And I have no doubt she only did what she felt to be

her duty, although you have not eyes to see, nor heart to comprehend it. How can you have? Humph!"

"We'll not discourse on that matter, Mr. Grice, with your leave, sir," remarked Nanny, with some simple dignity. "O'course, you have your op-pinion, and I've mine, and they runs very different ways. That's what she did, however, and she let him see it soon. I needn't stop to talk about it," said the mother, dismissing a whole chapter of anxious pain with that remark, and a heavy sigh. "Thank God, he know'd his faith, and didn't give it up; but he wouldn't make a disturbance, nor be a care to me, so he goes off to sea. He got out early one morning, and settled every-think with the capt'n, and he comes back to say, 'good bye, mother,' and he goes to sea. She did it. I hope God will forgive her falseness and her hardness, now she's on her dying bed.

"You needn't speak, sir, I'm coming round now to the point. When my lad was gone, I didn't spake with her, and I wouldn't—no, I wouldn't—till she got ill. She had a stroke, one Sunday, and they sent for me to come, being the only one of her kin in the place. I nurses her, day and night; I'll not talk about it, but for the sake of the blessed Lord who forgiv' His enemies," said Nanny, looking upwards with a reverent curtsy, "I was a daughter to her, and when she comes to a little, and knowed it, she was thankful. I must say that: the doctor says she owes her life to my tending, and she was thankful. Well, she was coming on fair, but last Sunday, just three week after her fust stroke, she got another, quite unexpect', and she's bin foolish-like, ever since. The doctor says 'tis all up with her, and though she lingers hard, being a strong woman all her life, she'll not last long; and indeed last night I thought her time were come."

"Now, my good woman, I have listened as patiently as I could, so please tell me, at once, what earthly reason you have for supposing all this has anything to do with me. The sick person you speak of, I never knew in my life."

"Thanking you for your kindness, sir, (for I know I

can't talk) I've come round now, and this is how it is. While she was laying woful ill, after that fust stroke, she talked, onawares-like, to herself a good bit, and always she was arping on your name—yes, she was, sir—Mr. Sellin Grice she calls you—and she kep' running off to old Mr. George Massinger, and young Mr. Bernard, and coming back to you, till surely a fool 'ud think she'd somethink on her mind about it; and so, sir, I do believe she has."

"It is very extraordinary! I never came across her, to my knowledge, in my life."

"However, sir, she seems well acquent with you—talked of you and young Mr. Bernard, over and over the same names, like one crazed. Pray, sir, was you ever wronged in any way, to your thinking?"

He paused: at the question memory flashed back to the earliest days within her scope,—days around which hung something of mystery always vaguely felt by him, though never closely investigated. Remembering this, he grew excited, and repeatedly questioned Nanny as to the purport of the sick woman's wandering remarks; but it was evident they had not been sufficiently connected to produce anything but surprise and faint suspicion in that honest mind.

"But one thing I'm going to tell you, sir, and 'tis the strangest of all, and conduced me to write you. Since she's had that last stroke, she's said very little, but the fust words she did say was this, '*Sent for Sellin Grice.*' And when I asks her 'what?' she says again, '*Bring me Sellin Grice,*' and then tells me where you lived, very low. When I asks, 'Do you mean Mr. Grice which married Miss Teresa Crossly?' then she begin to whisper of Mr. George Massinger, that's bin dead this many a yeer, which made me think she was silly. But when I come to think over it, I got so oneasy about it all, that I wrote you, but couldn't say much, not being a schollard. I hope you'll forgive it, sir, if 'tis all trouble for nought."

"I am glad you wrote," he said, vacantly; and after a thoughtful pause, asked her whether anything else had occurred?

"One thing else, and that's all," answered Nanny, whose "points" seemed to be arranged in an order which nothing must interrupt. "Yest'day she got better all at once, for a hour's spell or so, and she bid me write to Mr. Bernard asking him to come see her, which I did; and she has me then put away some letters which she kep'—every scrap of paper, I do assure you, sir, which she owns. So I puts them all up in one parcel, and she has the doctor to seal it, and write on 'For Mr. Bernard Massinger,' and she's got that parcel under her head now, as I'm a sinful woman. She turned worse when that were done, and to-day she's nigh the end, I surely think."

"She knows Mr. Massinger?"

"She do well, sir. She's knowed him yeers. Afore my husband married me, he used to see that young gentleman come often to see her; and wonderfully kind they seemed together. 'Tis only Dame Horner, sir; she helps me nurse," said Nanny in explanation, as a little, crooked Goody appeared at the cottage door. "And she's stone deaf, or I wouldn't have had her in. Most folks would talk so about it all."

"She's a-stirring. And she's a-garsping. Oneasy," reported this new comer, in the loud, whispering tone peculiar to the deaf; whereupon Nanny, curtsying to her visitor, went indoors.

Next moment, she put her head through the window above, and hurriedly begged him to come upstairs. He complied, and found himself in a neat, large chamber, with Nanny supporting the head of her relative, whose breath came in gasping sighs. Those striking features he had seen before, but where? The dying face, like one remembered through the hazy indistinctness of a dream, or which calls on memory through the mists of long vanished years, drew him with unconscious familiarity to the bedside, and as he bent anxiously over, he spoke.

"Mrs. Morgan, I am Selwyn Grice. Can you hear me? I am Selwyn Grice."

Her mind must have been fast closing to outward

things, but that name had power to force it back to consciousness. Her features immediately stirred, with a gleam of recognition, and the uninjured hand, which he had taken, closed upon his with a spasmodic grip. She seemed struggling to speak,—he bent his ear to her lips, but distinguished only one word—

“George —”

Nature was too far spent to do more; she did not seem to hear his next earnest appeal, and, remaining quite motionless, grew chill while they yet watched beside her.

“I was too late. She was dying while you thought her asleep,” he observed to the daughter-in-law, when they had gone down stairs.

What should he do now? He knew nothing of the deceased, and there seemed no clue by which he could possibly thread the mystery attached to any of these circumstances.

“Are you sure there are no letters, no papers which might enlighten me?”

“No, sir, I’m certain there’s none, but what she had put up for Mr. Bernard. She made me turn every place out to find ’em. But there’s her Will not read yet. She had that business done just afore she was took with the second fit: but may be that wouldn’t help you.”

“I don’t see how it could,” Selwyn replied, pondering. “But I’ll tell you what, Nanny,—you say you expect Mr. Massinger here?”

“I do, sir; she asked him come. Suppose you stay and see him, Mr. Grice?”

“That is what I shall do,” he rejoined, though not sanguine of obtaining information by that step. He enquired the address of the lawyer who had prepared the Will, and then feeling very fatigued, (agitation of any sort was apt greatly to affect him since his severe illness), prepared to go to the village inn which Nanny recommended.

“If Mr. Massinger comes, be sure you let him understand I am waiting to see him,” was his earnest injunction.

tion; and he then sought the repose in which the interests of the last few hours were soon forgotten.

Contrary to expectation, Mr. Massinger did not arrive: therefore the funeral was performed, the Will read, yet nothing promised to satisfy the curiosity of Selwyn. The lawyer knew no more of the deceased than that she had been always shunned by her neighbours as a woman of stern and reserved character; the Will only showed that she appeared to have forgotten her animosity on her deathbed, and had left all her little property to her grandson, with a bequest of £30 to her daughter-in-law.

"It is certainly a strange affair," ruminated Selwyn. "But perhaps the old lady was crazy; or that woman, her daughter, may have had false ears. I shall not trouble myself any more about it, but go home to-morrow. Well, I might have written," he added, his thoughts resting, with some self-reproach, on Teresa. "But it was such a long story to tell. I shall be there before a letter, now, however."

He called at the cottage, and told Nanny of his intention.

"But I will give Mr. Massinger one more chance, as I shall not go till to-morrow at noon. If he should arrive meanwhile, be sure you let me know. And even if he does not, I can call on him in town," mentally added Selwyn, more reluctant than he was aware to give up his last hope of solving the mystery.

Late that evening, Nanny opened her door in answer to a quick summons, and admitted Bernard Massinger. He seemed in a nervous state, and hastily asked how was Mrs. Morgan?

"She's dead, sir. And buried," returned Nanny, solemnly. Her good heart was touched to see how the news shocked him.

"Why, 'tis such an unfortunate piece of business!—I did not get your letter—you are her daughter-in-law?—I did not get it till long after date, for it had to follow me to two or three places; but, directly I received it, I shot off here, and find,—Bless me! Poor Mammy!"

His blue eyes were full of emotion and tears; he hid them with his hand, and repeated that action several

times while listening to particulars of her illness, given in Nanny's rambling manner.

"Did—did she say much? Did she talk of any one?" was his next anxious enquiry.

"She talked, Mr. Bernard, of you a good bit, and of Mr. Grice. Likewise of Mr. George Massinger; but Mr. Grice tells me she must have bin wandering, for he never speak to her in his life, and old Mr. George has lain quiet this many a year."

Blank was her listener's face as he regarded her.

"Do you mean to say,—is Mr. Grice in the neighbourhood?"

Nanny gave him the history of Selwyn's arrival and stay; to which he listened in silence, but with a white, anxious look. When she had finished, he drew a long breath, and then spoke quickly.

"Why, of course, a child could have seen that she was wandering.—Talking of a man she had never seen, and of my old father—old Mr. George, of course,—in that senseless way! You were very foolish to bring the gentleman down on such a business. Where are the papers? quick!"

"Here they be, Mr. Bernard. I promised her I would put them into your hand, and none other, so here"—

She unlocked an old bureau, and produced a parcel, which he put into his breast, buttoning over it his coat and light surtout, with nervous fingers.

"Now, with your leave, sir, I'll show you where Mr. Grice is staying. He's uncommon anxious to see you."

"I cannot stay—impossible!" he answered. "I am returning by the express, and have just a few minutes to catch it. Tell the gentleman I can give him no information whatever—not a word—and that I suppose she was crazy when she called for him. I am surprised you troubled him with such rubbish. You should have known better."

So saying, he hastily opened the door.

She noticed, that as she stood behind him with the light, his shadow was cast with strong distinctness on the

side of the porch, on seeing which, he gave a violent start, and shrank back upon her, as though imagining it was the figure of a visitor. Recollecting himself, he hurried into the darkness, leaving simple Nanny to the reluctant conclusion that, after all, he was right, and that she had given Mr. Grice a deal of useless trouble.

Of the same opinion was Selwyn when, next morning, she told him of this occurrence; but he was kind enough not to show any vexation, and to thank her as they parted. A milder gentleman than he looked she thought him, while gazing after his retreating figure; but indeed it would have taken more than present disappointments to annoy him that morning. He had risen from sleep in a frame of mind singularly grave and religious. His first thoughts had been given to prayer and self-examination, and the scrutiny had left him abashed, contrite, moved by a feeling of truer humility than had ever yet struck its salutary blow upon his heart. A review of the last few days showed him, clearly as heavenly revelations are wont sometimes to flash, that his "conversion" was not yet so complete as he had thought it; that he was dangerously ready, unless very watchful, to be again bound by gross bands to earth; that, while pursuing this new interest, and occupied with the numerous sanguine fancies naturally born of it, his spirit had been eager, disturbed, almost prayerless. Meditating thus, with the earnestness of a man who is sincerely anxious for his salvation, Selwyn, for the first time in his life, took a disappointment well, and humbled himself with simplicity before Him who searches the heart, and has pity, nothing less than Infinite, upon its weakness and inconsistency.

Engrossed by these thoughts, he had entered the train and proceeded some distance before he gave attention to exterior objects; but at length he noticed that he had a single fellow-traveller, an aged gentleman, who, with moving lips, read from a thick volume. Something about his appearance inducing a second glance, Selwyn perceived that he was in the company of a Catholic priest, and, on looking more attentively,

was surprised to recognise the unforgotten features of Father Lawrence, the friend of his earlier manhood. For more than one reason he did not consider this an agreeable discovery; and when the priest, closing his book, looked up cheerfully, as though prepared for conversation, the recognition which followed was dashed by some reserve on both sides. They were sufficiently civil, however; and Mr. Lawrence, with a lingering look at his companion, asked kindly after Teresa and the children. Selwyn answered briefly; natural awkwardness of feeling prevented conversation; and each of the travellers made a private intention to change carriages at the first opportunity.

... ..

At a quiet country station, where flowers climbing beneath the windows, hang their heads languidly in the summer's heat—where, during the intervals of business, a warm repose reigns over the place—in a small room opening from the sunny platform, a telegraph lad sits before his idle instrument. He has so little to do that, to keep himself from dozing in the sultry stillness, he is playing at marbles—superior marbles, a new purchase, and their click, as he gives many a well-directed aim, is the only sound on the air. But hark—another sound comes from the distance, a shrill, faint whistle, and a hum, swelling into a continuous, increasing roar. A train is coming. Well, let it come. It is an extra train, and it don't stop here: it may bang away. And bang away it does, with a wild scream, shaking the windows and platform of the station as it rattles through, and making the marbles dance out of their scientific positions. The lad pauses, to watch, through the open door, the fitting carriages and white-glancing faces of the passengers, and then resumes his game. Again there is silence, until, after a warning gurgled from its deep throat, the clock strikes—THREE. He glances listlessly up; then, as if the fingers were pointed with a stern and solemn warning, suddenly utters a dreadful cry, and with both arms flung up, rushes, like a little maniac, out on the platform. The station-master coming

leisurely down a side-path, sees him, and runs forward.

"I didn't signal.—I didn't signal, and the up-train is just due!" cries the boy.

"My God!"

The man fairly staggers, appalled by the frightful peril. If the up-train is punctual to its time, and has left the next station, where, according to some late agreement, it ought to have been detained until this train (run on for some casual purpose) had passed, they must inevitably meet, and a catastrophe ensue. There is a tunnel on the line. May God be merciful this day.

The alarm is quickly raised, and officials start from various corners. Now the signals work with frantic speed. After a breathless pause, the needle quivers with the response—the up-train *has* passed the next station, and is on its way unconscious of danger; so clearly there is nothing to do but prepare for the worst. Men, with grave faces, hurry down the line. A surgeon, and then another, appears on the scene: the few inhabitants of the neighbourhood, suspending every employment, gather, with straining eyes, on the little bridge which spans the rails; and all this time the poor negligent lad, kicked indignantly by a dozen feet, stands shivering and crying on the platform.

... ..
"Well, we had not *that* to bear in my young days," said Father Lawrence, as the train, after tearing, with a desperate shriek, into subterranean gloom, and rattling, quivering, in darkness relieved only by flitting gleams of light from an occasional crevice overhead, at length emerged into the fair sunshine, and triumphantly screamed to the fields which it cast behind it.

The old gentleman laughs, though rather nervously, for, though on the line pretty often, he can never get quite used to this way of travelling, never overcome a horror of those underground passages. Selwyn, also, feels a strange uneasiness creeping over him, and to escape it, shows a willingness to converse. There is more good-will between them that moment than there has been during their two hours' unbroken journey.

"We had a very different way of travelling in those days," resumed the priest. "It was safety versus speed then; but the saying is reversed by this generation. It is altogether too clever for an old loiterer like me."

("You wouldn't be a Romanist if you did not oppose progress of any sort," was Selwyn's mental remark; but he said)—

"What, do you regret the good old Highflier so long? His neck is broken and will never be set again, depend upon it. But I also must own a sneaking attachment to him, for the sake of old times. To a gay young dog as I was, there was something pleasant about travelling in those days, what with the bright company you often met, outside, the jolly coachman with his inexhaustible stories, and the hundred incidents you had time to notice on the road. Yet I must say I should not like to coach it to London now. The improvements which we grumble at are useful to you and me, sir, after all."

"A curious incident recurs to my mind just now," observed Mr. Lawrence, shortly afterwards. "A few days ago, I was travelling on this line with a lady, Mrs. Thrale, and she, though generally a firm, sensible woman, got into a most nervous state as we passed through that tunnel behind us. I assure you, she was white as ashes, gasping for breath all the time we were in; and she told me afterwards, that if we had not emerged at the instant we did, she should certainly have lost the power to breathe, so oppressive was the feeling of suffocation. We were not in darkness either, as to-day, having lamps in the carriage. Well, here follows the contradiction:—We had to return the same way next evening, and of course being very uneasy for her, I made it a point to engage her in conversation until we were quite through the tunnel, and then asked her when her fears were to begin. She could hardly believe she had passed through the dreaded ordeal without her knowledge even; but she had."

"Ah, it is strange what tricks the nerves can play us," remarked Selwyn. "I have experienced that on more

than one occasion. I remember, soon after coming to England, I was laid up through too hard a course of study,—doctors said I must go into the country—mustn't so much as open a book. Accordingly, I went to a friend in Derbyshire, and seemed to be immediately benefited by the change—spent hours in strolling alone about the beautiful neighbourhood. But you will scarcely believe what queer fancies I used to have during those wild, lonely walks. It seems strange to sit here in broad daylight and say such a thing, but I used to see pixies—good people, you know—and that as plainly as I see you now. Little, tiny creatures in green, they were, on the top of every hillock, and starting up almost from under my feet. I remember their gestures and costume with the clearest distinctness; and, positively, I used to talk to them. During my visit, I had another attack of my former illness, and when I got up again I never saw even a fairy-sandal; so, clearly, those fancies sprung from a distempered brain. It was a queer hallucination, was it not?

“But,” continued Selwyn, “something more impressive happened to me shortly before I left America. The night before I meant to embark, I had gone to my bedroom rather early—and I had not undressed, neither, I am entirely confident, had I fallen into a doze, when all at once a most strange sensation crept over me, and I thought I was again on the deck of the ship in which I was to sail—and which, indeed, I had visited that morning, in high spirits, glad to be on the point of starting. I was again on deck; and, strange to say, I saw my second self, as it were, leaning against the bulwarks—a young fellow, as I was then—dressed precisely the same, and regarding me with a steady, most mournful gaze. While I looked, he slowly moved, glided over the vessel's side, and seemed to disappear beneath the water. When I came to full consciousness, in my bedroom, I was standing—standing, mind you—sensibly enough, a boot-jack in my hand, having been about to pull off a refractory boot—nothing but what was ordinary and natural, you will own. The occurrence impressed me so strongly, that I would not

sail in that ship; and, indeed, could not persuade myself to leave America till six months afterwards.

"I must add, what greatly surprised me, that vessel did not meet with any accident—got to London safely, and in due time.

"When I had summoned courage, at length, and come over, I happened to mention the circumstance to a friend. 'You had more hardihood than I should have had,' said he, 'in crossing the ocean after that warning; and though you have escaped this time, I should advise you never to run the same risk again.' He then told me of a strange thing which had occurred to himself some years before. He lived then at Nantes, and his wife had come over to visit some relatives—in Durham, I think it was—however, somewhere in the north, here. When the time of her return was fixed,—vessel, and all,—he experienced a most depressing feeling which pursued him day and night, and constantly urged him to prevent her return by that ship. Do what he might, he could not reason himself out of that miserable sensation, and at last he wrote, entreating her not to act upon any of their previous arrangements, but to go by land to Dover, and so have as little of the water as she could. Though she by no means shared his apprehensions, and though the change of route necessarily involved much more trouble and expense, his wish was expressed so urgently that she complied, and let the vessel sail without her. It was well she did so—that ship was wrecked a day or two afterwards—fatally wrecked—every one on board perishing. Now this is all undoubtedly true, having been told me by a well-known friend, a man of sense and veracity."

"The most incredulous must certainly consider it a very strange coincidence," said Mr. Lawrence. "I can tell you of something as striking, though with a disastrous termination. I knew the person—a small landowner in the north. He had been tempted into getting unjust possession of a field which ought to have come to a nephew's share, every one said, but got drawn into this man's grip, and couldn't easily be recovered. By-

and-bye, the nephew died; the field remained in the uncle's hands, and became a very productive bit of property, but, strange to say, the man could never be induced to enter it—wouldn't put a foot within the enclosure on any account whatever, and used to avoid it by always taking another route through the lanes, a long 'round,' but that didn't matter, it seemed. This lasted for twenty years; no less a time, I assure you. One night, the old man was making merry with some friends in a tavern near, and they began to joke him freely on his superstitions, at last laying a wager that he dared not cross that field in his homeward way. Whereupon, he vowed that he dared and would go; and they soon after separated. At the entrance of that meadow was a tall, two-stepped, awkward stile, such as often endangers the pedestrian's limbs in country walks. Next morning, he was found lying by that stile, his head jammed between the bars, dead as a stone. He had evidently slipped while descending it, broken his neck—and there he lay. It was a very singular and melancholy accident."

"I should rather consider it a direct visitation from Him who so emphatically calls Himself the 'Avenger of the wronged,'" said Selwyn, decidedly. "The wretched man had run the full length of his tether—he was 'waited for by the sword' of Retribution, and it overtook him in his audacity,—smote him, as it were, on the very scene of his crime. An occurrence like that ought to be of salutary and pointed significance to the whole neighbourhood."

"We must not be over ready to put our particular interpretation on such things," observed the priest. "It is more charitable to suppose that owing to the darkness and his failing sight, he slipped, by such an accident as might happen to you or me. Let us hope that while lying helpless, and yet sensible, as he may have done, the poor soul occupied itself in contrite prayer."

"It may have been as you say, (for the poor wretch's sake, we will hope it was), it may have been just as you say, and still his tragic end have been, none the less, a

direct and visible act of Divine Justice. It is a solemn truth, made manifest by Scripture and reason, that sin must be punished even after repentance and pardon; for though, through the merits of the Saviour's sacrifice, we are then exempted from the terrible eternal death incurred by our first wilful transgression, he is blindly mistaken who supposes that he is also quit of the minor consequences of his offences—who dares to be without 'fear' of even 'forgiven' sin. Love may pardon the culprit, but Infinite Justice requires that he be chastised. Whether punishment follow swiftly on his crime, or be delayed for years, 'sealed up in a bag,' as the Almighty Avenger so solemnly expresses Himself; whether it be signally visible, or unrecognized even by the sufferer; whether in a severe, or mitigated shape, is according to the decrees of Omniscient Wisdom—come it must, and come it does, to every mortal who has knowingly violated the precepts of the Universal Lawgiver."

"In upholding that most wonderful attribute of the Most High—His adorable Justice—you must not forget," gently said the priest, "that 'in the midst of judgment, He remembers mercy,' that 'His mercy is over all His works.' Nineveh —"

"Found mercy on repentance. In all Scripture, think that is one of the most striking examples of Divine Justice deigning to seem appeased by the offender's tears. But even in that case, Retribution was only withheld;—witness the subsequent fall of that proud city, which became a 'desolation, and dry as a desert.' And for one instance in which the Hand of punishment was so long delayed, you will find hundreds in which the transgressor was 'overtaken' by it. Holy Writ is full of examples. I need not quote them to a man of your reading and reflection. For my part, I think that of all the instances there recorded, two especially are to be remembered; the one, national, the other, individual; you will find them in the passage of Israel through the Wilderness, and in the career of King David. It is a striking, a most significant lesson, that, in each case, the sentence of punishment was pronounced immediately

after the assurance of pardon. How does Moses plead with the Almighty? 'Pardon, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of Thy mercy.' 'I have pardoned,' answered the Lord God, 'according to thy petition.' And THEN He declares that the Promised Land shall be entered by two only of that multitude; the rest must bear their punishment, sore, though mitigated; their bones must whiten in the 'Wilderness.' And what are we taught in the life of David?—David, that chief of penitents, whose Psalms describe so powerfully the anguish of a truly contrite heart. The Prophet Nathan is sent to tell him, that though the Lord has 'put away his sin,' the penalty thereof is at hand, and must be borne. 'The sword shall not cease to pursue thine house for generations to come.' And, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own family.' And was not David, for most part of his life, truly a sorrowing and troubled man? The 'sword' was in his 'house,' and it was a sword of blood, a sword never sheathed. There indeed, was a signal instance of chastisement following on forgiven sin, coming, rigorous and continued though it was, in a mitigated form,—and exerted against whom? A reprobate? A hardened soul? No, against, let me repeat, the chief of penitents, the 'man after God's own heart.' Alas! why does not such an example strike deeply to the breast of the unthinking, the callous, and the continual offender? 'If the righteous shall be visited with punishment, how much more the wicked and the sinner?'

"It has been sometimes, objected, I know," continued Selwyn, "that though the great doctrine of Retribution in this earthly life is strikingly exemplified by the Old Testament, it is not fully carried out by the New. This has always appeared to me a hasty and an erroneous inference. It is true that instances are less frequent in the New Testament, but why? Clearly, because the Messiah, as He declares, came 'not to *destroy* the law and the prophets, but to *fulfil*;' and, because, as Paul says, 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for

instruction in righteousness.' The Law and the Gospel are in perfect harmony; the one was never intended to supersede the other, excepting with regard to *ritual observances*."

"I perceive, Mr. Grice, that you take a gloomy view of this subject: you look upon suffering in its retributive character only. In doing so, you miss the most comforting, the most elevating hope which the Christian can feel—the hope that, through grace, and humble union with his suffering Lord, afflictions become beneficial, meritorious."

"Stop, stop," interrupted Selwyn, with the heat he always betrayed in discussion. "Perhaps I have not explained myself clearly on this point. I believe that afflictions can be beneficial—*morally* so—and that, when dutifully received, their true end is to sober, to purify, to 'bring forth peaceable fruits of righteousness;' and this especially when they are such as tend to disgust us with the world, or to startle us from spiritual apathy—a severe sickness, for instance. In these cases, the punishment becomes a mercy; the offender is 'chastised' in 'love;' and the retributive scourge, which hardens the insubmissive heart, is a blessing to the repentant and filial. In this view, suffering is highly beneficial; but if you try to edge in the doctrine of human 'Merit,'—gliding easily, I suppose, to 'Satisfaction' and 'Indulgences,' then, I warn you, you enter upon ground where I cannot meet you but in open warfare."

"I have no wish to urge you to it, Mr. Grice," said the priest, observing the excited aspect of his companion. "You may recollect we used, in former days, to have lengthy arguments together; but we always ended as we had begun. What's that?"

A piercing whistle, sharply repeated and answered—a curious movement—a hoarse call or two. Something is going wrong. Down claps every window, and heads look anxiously out. The peril is instantly understood. *We are on the same line with an approaching train.*

Such a scene of confusion as follows, such rapid, dismal whistles, such heartrending screams of distress as rise from those flying carriages, may we never hear or see

again. Some of the doors are burst open, and the frenzied occupants leap out, to be left, writhing and ghastly, on the road. Keep in—keep in—see! we have still a chance for life. By a special providence, the trains sighted each other at a good distance. The men have turned off the steam, and stand, white and breathless, in a terrible calculation—we slacken perceptibly—we slide onward—good God! we meet!—No! Our lingering impetus carries us within six yards of each other, and there, with labouring vapour bursting from every outlet, face to face, we stop.

We stop, but are in imminent danger, for other trains are closely due, and if the irregularity has not been already rectified, our destruction is certain. The casual train has made the least way—it must go back, and we must follow. Slowly we follow, as, with retrograding movement, it slowly goes, a belching monster, whose murderous crash has been arrested, but whose hot breath still snorts at us in rage and menace. What's that! A man in the next compartment, unable to bear the suspense, and trusting to the slow movement of the train, has jumped out: he lies with a dislocated neck, so keep quiet there, if you value your safety: we keep quiet, in such prayer as terror can make: we proceed without new danger; and presently,—passing men, who stand and seem to cheer,—passing an engine with a tail of carriages, which has arrived, and been detained for us,—passing beneath the crowded bridge, we glide into the station. The casual train slides off into safety, and we pause before a throng of anxious faces on the platform. Our stoker jumps down—heavy beads are standing on his forehead.

"*Six yards between us and eternity!*" he shouts, with an outstretched arm. "SIX YARDS BETWEEN US AND ETERNITY!" He is a God-fearing man from that hour.

"We are saved, Heaven be praised!" said Mr. Lawrence.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Selwyn.

He had behaved very well during the hard trial, although seemingly twice on the point of fainting, while the darkly-swelling veins of his forehead proved how

great was his inward distress. As he now endeavoured to unclasp the door, two among the kindly-busy officials, observing the action, came up to assist. They carefully helped out the aged priest; then, as he trembled, and seemed weakened by agitation, they went forward with him, one on each side, while Selwyn stepped on the platform without aid. Mr. Lawrence happening to look back, saw him reel, clap his hand to his head, and, falling heavily against a gentleman who ran to offer support, irresistibly bear him also to the ground. Both were instantly covered with blood. A surgeon and small crowd came in a moment; both were raised—the bleeding Selwyn examined, and then, reflecting the surgeon's face, all looked grave.

"No, surely not, doctor!" faltered Mr. Lawrence.

"He has burst a vessel in the head," was the quiet reply. "Death must have been instantaneous."

It had been. But his last thoughts were given to prayer; the holy name of his Maker was the last word on his lips, so let us leave him to Divine Mercy, and say no more.

Much shocked, Mr. Lawrence was turning away, when he was surprised by a deep groan from the gentleman who had also fallen, and who, found to be unhurt, had stood gazing on the scene with a stupified air. As two of the porters, obeying a sign from the surgeon, proceeded to lift the lifeless figure, he started convulsively, and seeming to shrink from his blood-stained dress, cried out in a wild way—

"*Where is thy brother?*" "*Where is thy brother?*"

With which strange words, Bernard Massinger fell into a heavy swoon, and was carried to the nearest farm house, where he lay many hours before consciousness could be restored.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PENITENT.

"Put your entire trust in the mercy of God. It is illimitable—more eager to receive you than you to fly to its shelter."

Thus exhorted Father Lawrence at the close of a long and deeply agitating conference with Bernard Massinger. The latter, lying very weak on the bed where they had placed him, kept his face turned from his revered friend, and wept incessantly. His soul, struck with intolerable remorse at the sight of his much injured and then lifeless brother, had given up the secret kept so long, and now lay, contrite and profoundly abashed, before the God of penitents. To the director of his earlier years, so fortunately at hand, he had made a full confession, and the good priest, carefully probing, wisely soothing, perceived that his dispositions were excellent, and rejoiced, with something of angelic triumph, over the conversion so long desired, so graciously and suddenly effected. They had lengthened conversations, the last of which Bernard closed by begging the priest immediately to communicate with the bereaved family in London.

"Go yourself, father, and tell them all my injustice. Here are some papers"—drawing from his breast-pocket the parcel which he had placed there the evening before :—

(And here it may be observed that he had turned back, when almost at the end of his journey, being fearful of discovery oozing out, and anxious to ascertain clearly if Selwyn had left the neighbourhood of T—; that he had been detained at the little station in consequence of the accident, and thus unexpectedly been brought into contact with the person so carefully avoided.)

"Here are papers which will corroborate, and detail, what I have told you. Give them to my eldest nephew; to him I make the reparation which I cannot make to—to— Tell him, tell Teresa, I entreat forgiveness—that if I die, as I think I soon shall, I cannot go in peace without their pardon."

"I trust it will be freely given, and that some of the family will soon be here to tell you so. His eldest sons will have to come—yes."

The priest paused, for Bernard drew a quivering, moaning sigh, knowing that he alluded to the funeral of the parent whose body lay, awaiting the inquest, a few yards off.

"Go quickly, sir, and return quickly, to reconcile me entirely to my long offended God. Every hour will be painful until you are here again."

"I will hasten, Bernard; and I will write to you after I have seen the family. Now can I safely leave you? Do you firmly hope?"

"I do, thank God. In spite of the past, I hope. Otherwise—but, pray, father, that there may never be an otherwise for me. Farewell. Be speedy."

Accordingly, Mr. Lawrence travelled in haste to London, and visiting the family, broke to them his important and varied tidings. This delicate duty he had anticipated with some pain; but he was soon relieved to find that he had not one great torrent to stem—he had not to control the anguish of suddenly bereaved love. He noticed, that although the children were deeply shocked, as it was natural they should be, their sympathy turned directly from the lost father to the living mother, with every demonstration of tender anxiety; while she, pale and cold among them, seemed, however, to have no tears for the husband so suddenly taken from her. The good priest did not like the expression which crept over her features while he unfolded his news; an expression, fixed, chilling, and severe, quite foreign to that mild, matronly face. With the weakness natural to most gentle people when under trial, Teresa sought some visible outlet for her excited feelings; she found it, not in lamentation over the

dead, but in resentment against the living—a feeling which possessed her to the expulsion of any more Christian or womanly.

“I will never forgive him!” she said, sternness in her eye and voice. “He has wronged us too bitterly for reparation. Through him, our married life has been full of anxiety and privations. Can his repentance make amends to my husband for the years of toil, of hard, hard labours which often overtasked his poor brain while he struggled to get food for these children’s mouths? And all this that man knew—he knew it, and yet could so treat his brother! Oh, it has been a bitter, bitter wrong! I will never forgive it.”

Mr. Lawrence shook his head while listening to these and similar expressions.

“You speak, my child, under a natural exasperation; but it must pass. You will, I know, listen to the promptings of more worthy sentiments.”

“Mother,” said George, who had been hastily summoned from town, “it has all been very hard, as you say, but let it be forgotten. For my part, I speak in poor father’s place, and I cannot help but pardon our uncle.”

“It is easy to talk, George,” returned his mother. “Think of our trials—think of your father’s cruel lot.”

“Teresa, my child, the Spirit of Evil keeps your mind brooding on the past, but, I repeat, you must forget it. There is nothing that poor, repentant man, now sick and lonely, so earnestly desires as your pardon. Do not withhold it. Let me take him the assurance he begs for. It is the only thing which can relieve his sufferings.”

“He deserves to suffer,” was her only reply.

The kind priest, being unable, at present, to bring her to softer feelings, could only hope that prayer and time would be more successful than his exhortations. He left London next evening, accompanied by George and Alfred, who went to show such respect to their father’s remains as circumstances would permit.

When the inquest was over, the body of George

Massinger was carefully deposited in the vaults of the village church, until it should be removed for more honourable interment in the tomb of his family.

That sad duty over, the youths lingered in the neighbourhood for the sake of their newly-discovered uncle, who wished to accompany them to London when he could bear the journey. As may be supposed, their first meeting with him had been very painful to all; and he, touched by the most humble contrition, would have risen, to beg, on his trembling knees, forgiveness from the family he had so wronged, but he was forcibly prevented by his eldest nephew. That young man, now the acknowledged and soon to be the lawfully constituted possessor of a great estate, behaved very well under a change which would have been trying to any mind. When first told the news by Mr. Lawrence, he had, for a brief interval, betrayed an agitation which hardly seemed to be caused wholly by apparent circumstances, and had uttered a few broken remarks which puzzled the priest, and required an explanation at some future time; but this over, he had displayed remarkable manliness of feeling, and showed for his uncle a delicate consideration never to be sufficiently admired.

When his health was somewhat better, Bernard Massinger returned to London,—where, for several reasons, he wished to stay for the present,—and took up his temporary abode in a retired suburb. There, changed in worldly position, yet more in spirit, he made his peace with the God so long abandoned, and leaned his breaking heart on the maternal bosom of the Church which receives the worst of sinners to comforting forgiveness. There, also, his health again succumbed under an attack which left him in a very languishing state. His patient submission was as striking as his penitence, and greatly edified his nephews, who were with him daily. He seemed to have only one earthly desire—to obtain the pardon of Teresa, who, still retaining her warm resentment, would make no enquiry, send no message, nor permit either of her eldest daughters to visit their uncle, though he had

only hireling attendance, and would have been comforted beyond expression by their kind ministry. ~~Her~~ unworthy feeling gave her features a cast of unpleasant reserve, and, unhappily, kept her from giving her thoughts to those long-neglected Catholic duties which she was now free to perform without interruption, were it not for this new obstacle which the powers of evil kept persistently in her way.

Her children, surprised and sorrowful, had recourse to weapons which rarely fail; and, after finishing one Novena without apparent effect, they trustfully began another. It was a touching thing to see the young family wrestling in prayer for the mother who, having once taught them so piously, gave an example so inconsistent; and doubtless it was owing to their datiful solicitude that grace visited her heart, and finally triumphed over the bitter feelings of nature. This was brought about, however, by means visible and unexpected.

Mr. Lawrence had written to Mary Crossly (with whom he had always maintained an affectionate intercourse) informing her of her sister's bereavement, and of the disclosures which had followed it. He had done this at the request of Bernard, who wished that the truth, which, sooner or later, must reach her ears, should be conveyed to her, of all in the world, without exaggeration or delay. Mr. Lawrence knew enough of her mind to suppose that the intelligence would be matter for both sorrow and thankfulness; but perhaps he was not quite prepared for the results which immediately followed.

One evening, as he was leaving Bernard, after a lengthened visit full of the solace so acceptable to the weary and sick of soul, he saw a cab come from the town end of the street, and roll to the invalid's door. A lady, veiled, and darkly dressed, alighted. Could it be Teresa? he thought, and retraced his steps in time to follow her into the parlour. As he entered, she turned with an exclamation of pleasure, and showed him the familiar features of Mary Crossly.

"Why, Mary, my child!"

"You look surprised, dear father. Ah, perhaps you have not had my letter? I wrote to say I was coming, and asked you to meet me here."

"It must be lying at my lodgings. I have been here nearly all day," he said; then looked with kind attention into her face, and maybe surmised something of what would come to pass.

She, earnestly and simply, spoke to him for a short time; he listened musingly, but without verbal comment, and then went up stairs to prepare Bernard for her visit. The news, though broken carefully, greatly agitated the invalid.

"Mary here!" he repeated. "Let me see her, for the love of heaven."

But though thus eager for her appearance, he trembled as her step came near, and hid his face with both hands, the image of prostration and shame.

A host of feelings, the most tender which can move a woman's heart, were mirrored in her eyes as they rested on the head brought so low; and with angelic kindness in voice and action, she gently touched his hands, and spoke.

"Look at me, Bernard. Do not shun *me*."

Their eyes met in a long, most eloquent gaze. There was no need for words; they fully understood each other. She knelt down by the bedside—the priest looking silently on, and Bernard, after struggling with his emotion, sobbed audibly. When he could speak—

"Mary, you are an angel of goodness.—I! good heaven! What a wretch I am."

"Bernard, what you are in the sight of God, that, and that only, should you be in ours. More precious are you now in His merciful eyes than perhaps you have ever been. You have repented—you have abjured your errors—"

"I have—I have—thanks be to His mercy!"

"I always hoped you would," whispered Mary, whose hope fulfilled was the reward of only Heaven knows what faithful prayers, with which she had pursued that wandering, but ever dear, life.

"You know," she continued, with the utmost simplicity and sweetness, "you know what caused our long separation; it was not that my affection ever changed, but that you became what I could not approve. That obstacle being removed, all is as it was before."

"My life-long love!—you come to tell me so?"

"Yes, Bernard, and I shall never leave you. Here is now my rightful place, to nurse, to comfort you, so long as God spares us to each other."

"It is too much mercy!" Bernard said, faintly, but with a deep colour in his wasted cheeks. "Do you hear, father?"

"Well."

The priest was unusually taciturn all at once. After lingering a moment, he went quietly out, his eyes looking very kind as he closed the door behind him.

Until evening darkened the room, the two remained in subdued, but happy, converse. Not often has human affection flowed in a course so strange as theirs, and led at last to peace. Yes, peace, henceforward—thought Mary, as she gazed on him always loved, and now with affection increased from every generous source while he lay sick, lonely, disgraced in human estimation, but happily restored to the favour of God. The same firm principle which had deterred her from wedding an irreligious man, made her indifferent to lesser considerations as that great objection was removed. The step she had taken might be blamed by superficial observers,—they might be poor—he very likely an invalid for the rest of his days—she disregarded all this, since they could live together in pious rectitude, and she tend him with the wifely duty long ago promised him. So she felt, in the goodness of her ingenuous heart; and so, doubtless, she repeated;—while Bernard, looking at her as she sat smiling near him, could hardly realize his great happiness.

He might well feel it deeply, for that lovely creature was a pearl of worth, coveted by many. Her's was one of those faces—we sometimes meet such—which time seems unable to touch, and excepting that a calm womanliness had taken the place of youth, she was the

Mary of earlier days. The rural life which she had always led, and a mind established in religious serenity, had forbidden years to take any sweetness from the smiling mouth and eyes, to change the contour of that lovely head, banded, crown-like, with fair brown hair, or to bring a haggard tinge to cheeks soft and pure as those of a child. She looked what she was, a good and attractive woman, whose simplicity and gravity were equally amiable, and portrayed a soul refined by steady thought, and beautified by true religion.

After a time, Mr. Lawrence came upstairs to talk about immediate arrangements. They were to be married as soon as possible—that was a settled point. Meanwhile, Mary would not quit her post by the couch of her betrothed, which she therefore retained, and by her tender care promised soon to revive his shattered health.

Calm, and full of gentle comfort was Bernard's hitherto troubled spirit, as he received her ministry, had constantly before him the sweet face which was the only light of his mortal eyes, might fall asleep, or waken, with her voice always near his pillow. They talked over the past frequently, and without reserve; and as little particulars came out, she put them together, until the whole of that bygone mystery lay clearly before her.

"I wish," she said, on one occasion, "you would tell me when it was that you first became acquainted with Mrs. Morgan. It must have been in your early youth, and yet, intimate though we then were, you never mentioned her name to one of us."

"No, for I first made her acquaintance by chancing to do a kind action, and as I was good enough then to dislike praise, I said nothing about it: that was, at first, the only reason of my silence. How did it happen? In this simple way. She had at that time a daughter, a deformed, childish-looking creature, about my own age, (I was then only fifteen), and I once happened to save her from severe suffering. Mrs. Morgan chanced to leave her alone in the cottage where they then resided, and during her absence, the place, through

some unexplained accident, took fire. I was passing on one of my long walks, and seeing smoke stealing through the open door, I entered, and found the poor crippled girl in some danger, and quite unable to stir. It was not difficult to remove her, and extinguish the flames which were not high; though, as no one came near us for an hour afterwards, the accident would have had a frightful termination had it not been for my providential walk. The poor mother's gratitude was extreme, for she regarded that child with an unbounded attachment. From that day she loved me for having saved her—yes, she did—poor Mammy! her affection was shown unwisely, but she loved me.

"After that incident I used to go, sometimes, though not often, to see her; but at that time, Mary, I had not the most remote idea of all she afterwards told me, nor suspected that she had had any previous acquaintance with my family. This state of things lasted about three years; one day, I found her unusually disturbed, and she then told me that she had just seen my brother George, that he was living, contrary to her expectation; and that day she first confessed a secret which she had closely kept so long.

"You know that, at the time of my father's sudden death, and my birth, it was believed my brother had died of fever. Do you remember ever hearing that his nurse and the gentleman, Colonel Grice, in whose custody my father had placed him, came to the Chace in the midst of that day's confusion, to say that the child had died in their presence? This was a falsehood, to which they had recourse for the furtherance of their own views, as you will see. He had not died, although his illness had been so dangerous as to render his recovery hopeless for some days; however, he slowly came round, and then it was perceived that he had entirely lost his memory. A strange circumstance is it not? Though he must have been ten years old, at least, he remembered nothing of what had occurred before his attack."

"I have heard of such an occurrence before," observed Mary.

"Well, love, it chanced to be a fortunate thing for those around him and favoured their intentions, as I have said. For that man, his temporary guardian, that Colonel Grice, was a bosom-friend of my father, and concurred in his religious sentiments, which were strictly intolerant of Catholicity; therefore he thought he should perform a laudable action if he carried out my father's well-known intentions of a Protestant education for the child. Perhaps you have seen, in the course of your life, how curiously a religious mania can distort the mind, and the lengths to which people under its blinding dominion will sometimes be carried? Bigoted in the extreme, as even Mrs. Morgan testified to me, the Colonel seems to have been clever at those false arguments which can so easily cloud our perceptions of right and wrong. After having wilfully deceived the child's relatives with regard to his existence, he then removed him, with his nurse (that is, Mrs. Morgan, you understand) to a distant country residence, intending to exercise there that strict, though not legally-appointed, wardship with which, as he persuaded himself, he had been virtually invested by my deceased father. But it soon fell out that Colonel Grice inherited some property in America; and as this compelled him to take up his abode there, he resolved to carry George with him, and keep him ignorant of all these circumstances until he was old enough to retain the principles of his education, and be safely informed of the truth. It was originally arranged that Mrs. Morgan also should go (she was a distant relative of the Colonel, and had been left to his care, a widow, with two young children of her own)—but the merest accident prevented that, and materially influenced *my* lot, as you will see:

The evening before their embarkation, George, while playing with her children, got into a passion over some trifle (he was apt to be soon irritated since his illness) and pushed the little girl down some steps near, whereby the poor little creature was seriously injured, and a cripple, indeed, from that day. Mrs. Morgan, a woman of strong feelings, and passionately attached to her daughter, could never bear to

look at George thenceforward, and would not be persuaded to accompany them to America. She told the Colonel, however, that she would keep his secret as long as he wished; so he provided her with decent means, and left her, with her children, in England. Mary, she heard, months afterwards, that the vessel had been wrecked when near the end of the voyage; and as Colonel Grice and most of the crew were certainly lost, she concluded that George also had perished, and for years had that belief, until she accidentally met him in the town of D——, near which she then resided. She knew his remarkable face at once, and of course his name settled his identity. At first, she imagined he had come to assume his inheritance; but from observations she was enabled to make, she found that he was ignorant of his real parentage, and so, I believe, he continued all his life, for his lapse of memory shortly before he left England, and the Colonel's sudden death so soon after, befriended us in our bad plans—God forgive us both!"

"Did you ever learn where he had passed his boyhood, and acquired his brilliant education?"

"That was done through the generosity of an American gentleman, a kinsman of Colonel Grice, and lawful heir to his property over there. Poor George, being forwarded to him when saved from the wreck, was very kindly protected by him; and well educated. It was suspected by all that he was a natural son of the Colonel, who had never, to any one's knowledge, been married; and everything favoured the supposition. All this, Mrs. Morgan discovered afterwards, by means of private incessant enquiries; but at the time she shocked me with news of his existence, she knew only that he was in D——, a stranger, awaiting some good appointment promised him by the Dean.

Mary, I am far from seeking excuses for my conduct, but do you not see how dangerously ready was the temptation, and how favourable every circumstance? There was George, likely, with his high friends and talents, to achieve a good position in the world; he was full of hope and spirit, quite unsuspecting of the rights

which I, on the contrary, had always regarded as my own. Poor mammy, through her fondness for me, was a fatal counsellor, and solemnly promised secrecy if I decided on letting things remain as they were. This all told on the weakness which is unfortunately my chief characteristic; and I wavered, I dared to urge specious reasonings against the dictates of my clear duty, until I wandered in a wretched maze of my own making, and finally went the way of all self-deceivers—deep into temptation.

“But ah, Mary, though I try to give you a glimpse of my mind, at that most unhappy time, there was something still more heavy weighing upon it—a sore anxiety and fear, which did more to blind me than anything else. Had it not been for *that*, I should have been courageous enough to do as duty enjoined: but how can I tell you what I mean? wretch that I was!”

She conjectured his meaning, and put out her hand, which he fondly retained.

“I had been promised *this*: ah, you know how it all was, my darling. I had been promised this treasure, and the mere idea of risking its loss made me beside myself with fear. You know, Mr. Crossly was one who regarded such things, and I apprehended that he would not give a poor man the alliance promised to the heir of the Massingers. I could not think it.”

“Still, Bernard, grandfather was always just. And at all events, it would have required something more than reduced circumstances to change *my* feelings towards you.”

“My Mary! I know that *now*; but *then* I reflected like a youthful fool, and I had my reward, or, rather, my bitter punishment for wishing to unite your pure life to one full of injustice and falsehood. How unexpectedly, yet how naturally, all came upon me! It was about that time I began to afflict you all by my neglect of religious practices and supposed doubts; but my disedifying conduct did not really arise from doubts about our blessed faith. In my heart, I never had the shadow of one.”

"Thank God for that!"

"The truth is simply this. I could not attend to Catholic duties without either being guilty of a bold sacrilege, or unburthening my mind of its secret in the confessional. I was not bad enough for the first alternative—the other would have necessitated immediate restitution, and that I refused. Thus, to keep my secret, it was soon necessary to give up the practices of my religion; and to secure a false peace in that unhappy strait, I next tried to attain the carelessness of general unbelief. It all came so easily, Mary, one bad step leading to another, until I had gone down into a gulf of sin and danger how little anticipated when I first began to stray from honest Truth! But though I led an irreligious life, I never could get rid of the lingering Faith which was my torment; and what pangs it caused me, what hours of remorse, can only be known to Him who mercifully left me the grace of fear. Oh, those wasted years, that danger, that folly! Oh innocence, honour, love—how, but for my stupid cowardice, you might have blessed those most wretched years!"

Deep feeling choked his voice, and kept him silent until Mary, with sweet assurances, had consoled him. Even then, he could not quit the theme.

"And can you really forgive him who so misjudged your heart; who blundered, and lost you for repute and wealth? Do you really stoop, angel of goodness, to a feeble, disgraced,"—

But here, with tender authority, she stopped him, and bade him dismiss such thoughts. She had come to the happiest lot which the world could offer her—which she had prayed for—to find him converted, and herself his loving wife. "For so long a time as you may be spared to me, Bernard," she mentally added, with a sigh, for the thought often occurred to her that he might not long require any earthly solace.

The one thing yet wanting for Bernard's peace—the forgiveness of Teresa—was obtained by this intercessor. Soon after her arrival in London, Mary wrote a long, affectionate letter to her widowed sister, and then went

to see her. She bore from Bernard the most humble and touching messages.

"Tell her," he said, "that the sharpest pain I ever endured was at the moment when I discovered that she, through an unexpected union, was involved in the consequences of my injustice. Tell her, Mary, that if, at first, I could have foreseen *that*, my affection for her dear self would have carried me safely over temptation. How deeply I have felt she may judge from the care with which I have always avoided her and the family. I was a coward—and to have looked often upon her, or one of them, would have driven me mad."

The interview between the long-separated sisters was affecting to both. Teresa had heard of the intended marriage with no pleasure, but, moved by the familiar face and voice, her heart rose above the hard feelings which had lately possessed it, and melted into kindness.

"I cannot refuse *you* anything, sister," she said, when Mary, at a fitting moment, had introduced the subject. "Since you have chosen him, and it will make you happy, I will forget all injuries. Tell him he has my forgiveness—as I trust he has that of his brother."

She was rewarded for the effort these words cost her, for her soul opened to the graces which awaited admittance, and she was soon humble, prayerful, anxious to atone by fervent regularity for the lukewarmness which had wasted so many years;—soon cried, with beaten breast, "How have I dared to retain aught against my brother, while I myself have such need of pardon?" Her children had, at length, the joy of finding her soft and gentle as of yore; of knowing that, at the feet of Father Lawrence, she was seeking forgiveness for scandals which had, privately, been very much deplored by them; and of seeing her go weekly to that banquet whose taste of fragrant sweetness had, alas! been strange to her tongue for many a cold and weary year.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LAST.

We have seen Teresa mercifully set again in the sure ways from which she had long strayed ; but she had yet to find punishment follow her for the past, and it came with a blow not light nor expected.

On the afternoon of Mary's quiet wedding day, Anna and Helena, who, with two of their brothers, had been present on the occasion, were giving their mother particulars of the event ; how kind looked the aged Father Lawrence, who officiated ; how Bernard had with difficulty gone through the ceremony, and swooned away when it was over ; how Mary, pale, but tranquil, had given, rather than needed, support, and afterwards sat down by her husband's couch, where, with her look and voice of touching sweetness, they had left her, a devoted nurse rather than a bride. The young people, who were greatly attached to their aunt, liked to talk of her beauty and goodness ; there was much in her lot which strongly appealed to the sympathy of generous youth.

"What I admire most about Aunt Mary," Helena remarked, "is her silence during all those years of disappointment. What a faithful, patient life ! I like to think over it, for I seem to discover some little new flower, very quiet, and therefore very sweet, every time I look."

"Yes," said Anna, "her life shows affection in its most elevated aspect, untouched by selfishness, and incapable of change. Dear aunt ! she is now rewarded as much as she cares to be on earth, though I fear it will not be for long. Do you think, George, that uncle Bernard looks any stronger than when you first saw him ?"

"George does not hear you ; he has been in a brown study this half hour," said Alfred. "You are thinking

of your own wedding, George," he added, with boyish bluntness.

It was curious to see the effect which this remark, simple though it was, had upon both George and his mother, as if an uneasy intelligence existed between them, and could be fanned into suspicion by a breath. He coloured deeply, and she quickly observed,

"Don't talk so, Alfred. I should be very sorry for George to have any such thing on his mind for a long time yet."

Hereupon George looked full at her.

"What do you signify by your remark, mother?"

"Dear me! George—nothing! nothing, but that you are yet so young."

"In years, yes; but still I am old enough to judge what is for my own benefit and happiness. You must remember that, mother, and not blame me for having exercised the right, as I have done."

It was her turn to question, which she did in faltering accents;—the other listeners, surprised at the feeling evoked by so common a remark, now retreating from the room.

"Mother, the fact is this: I am married, and have been for some time."

"George! to whom?"

"To Clara Warner."

There was blank silence on the mother's face—inflexibility on that of the son. After a pause, he resumed;

"I had long been attached to her. She was left unprotected by her uncle's death, and had to go as governess to Mr. Bonna's children. That I could not long stand; and as I had a tidy income, I did no more than a man of honour should do, in offering her a home. I preferred doing this quietly, because poor father being the man he was—besides, she is not a Catholic, and I knew, mother, that you are too easily moved on that point. She is so nervous and delicate that no worry, no annoyance, must come near her. I could not have it, and I cannot have it. Still, mother, I often wished you knew of it all; and when our little boy was born, a week before poor father's death, I quite intended to

tell you at once; but, since then, what with one thing and another, we have all been tried, and—it was awkward. However, you know all now, and I am sure you will be a dear, good mother, as you always were, and do your best to let things be happy among us.”

So saying, he kissed her wan cheek.

Ah, his past conduct was explained to her now—his reserve, his partial alienation, that careless attendance at his own church, those half-confessed visits to another. He had gone there to see *her*, of course; perhaps to please her and her temporary protectors. And all this for one almost a stranger to his own dear family—all this without a word to the mother who loved him! Don't be too hard on the youth, Teresa: might he not plead an example from your own early career?

Though naturally shocked, and deeply hurt, Teresa had the prudence to be silent. George, as is usual with those who do not stand on the best ground, had spoken with an unconsciously authoritative manner which warned her that he would brook contradiction just as little as another, whose figure seemed again before her eyes as she looked at her son. Besides, reproaches could not alter the past, but could easily be mischievous for the future. By a great effort, she refrained from allusion to any point but that urgently interesting.

“The child, George? of course, it is baptised, and in your faith?”

“Why—he has not yet been taken to any church. Clara knows what my wishes would be, of course, but she does not yet conscientiously meet them—and—we don't bother each other about it, mother, that's the fact. I think the man who tries to force his wife's inclinations on such a point, deserves to be kicked. Let the thing be left quiet: it will come round all the sooner for it. The boy is so young, there is plenty of time to talk.”

But here the full heart could not help utterance.

“Oh, George, George! You who know your duty so well! Supposing he dies without baptism? Supposing others come before she—oh, you are wrong, my boy—wrong!”

“You will find it all right, mother, if you will only

be moderate. I think we had better not talk any more just now, either of us."

Saying which, he abruptly left her, with this arrow in her breast.

What could the mother wisely do, but, following his suggestions, try to cement this new family tie by forgiveness and an inviting demeanour? Accordingly, she never uttered another reproach to George, or to the delicate little lady whom he soon afterwards introduced to his family, and who came to the maternal embrace with tears which seemed silently to plead for pardon, and a meek face which promised amiability. Hope soothed Teresa's wounded heart as she saluted her daughter-in-law—hope that, by affectionate perseverance, she might lead her from unconscious error into the paths of truth. A similar feeling gave particular fondness to the first long kiss which she imprinted on the baby-cheek of her grandson, when George, with an earnest look, placed the infant in her arms. She forgot that it had been born in concealment, of an union unhallowed by the blessing of Catholic minister or parents—enough that the helpless little being came to her with a mute appeal which she could quickly comprehend and well remember. She made the child a promise with that first kiss—a promise which, in the course of time, she happily fulfilled.

For Clara, whose gentle disposition made her sincerely desire the sympathy of her new relatives, was presently induced to yield on the point so anxiously interesting to them all, and by the time her second son was born, had consented that the children should be baptised, and brought up in their father's faith. The time came, too, when she was rewarded for that natural good feeling by the precious grace of conversion, and humbly seeking admission into the true Church, not only became a faithful worshipper herself, but by her example edified her long-careless husband, and sweetly won him back to the pious regularity of his youth. This did not come to pass until divers little feet had been heard in the hall at the Chace—not until Teresa's

hair was white under her cap of widowhood;—but still the day arrived, and she lived to rejoice over it.

Happily, Teresa had, before this, other causes for devout thankfulness supplied by more than one of her precious children. She had had that experience which fills a parent's soul, to overflowing, with an emotion less human than heavenly; she had seen her son Paul at the solemn ministry of the altar, and afterwards had sat, with beating heart, and tears, to hear him pouring forth those words of eloquence which flow from lips fired with zealous love, and which already had drawn into safety many sinners, first fruits of an abundant harvest. Anna, too, special child of our Lady, has been favoured with a religious vocation, and having successfully passed the trial of her noviciate, now goes the way of those good handmaids who, in poverty and sickness, serve their Master in His image. Not without a struggle had Teresa given up this beloved daughter to a life so toilsome; and her consent would have been yet harder to obtain but for the zealous letters of her son Paul, whose exhortations at length urged her to the sacrifice. This brother and Anna had always maintained a close correspondence, and greatly helped each other on the difficult way to which both were called.

“You tell me, sister,” he had replied, when she first expressly confided to him her pious wish, “that this inclination to the religious life has long been strong within you. You do not surprise me by saying so, for I have always expected you would be a nun. Do you know when this impression first came to me? It was at that first death-bed we ever attended, the death-bed of our first convert, young Mark Rogers. You may remember, I had left you with him for a few moments; when I returned, you were holding his lifeless head and praying. I looked at you, my sister, and a remarkably vivid idea flashed upon me,—Anna is in her place—she has done her first work as Sister of Mercy. Now, before my eyes is lying your letter, which says that you distinctly hear your call; and I kneel to pray that you

may implicitly obey Him who summons His servants when, and to what, He pleases."

It is remarkable that the meeting of these two, after years of separation, was by another death-bed. Father Paul, who had arrived on his first mission only the day before, was called hastily to a dying person; a nun, absorbed in prayer, was near the sick couch, but in the bent figure he did not recognize his sister, until the offices of charity were no longer needed. Mutual recognition then ensued, and, under the circumstances, had a touching significance. But they have met often, since then, engaged on the same work of love.

To the same convent of Mercy came, in time, another person mentioned in these pages—not Helena, whose charming graces have been duly appreciated by a young scion of a line known and esteemed by every Catholic, but one in whom she has felt a deep and constant interest.

One morning, Father Lawrence visited the handsome town-residence which Teresa now called her own, and, using his privilege as an old friend, penetrated the boudoir where Helena, with a tender and thoughtful smile, was inspecting some articles just arrived in preparation for a certain approaching happy event,—an occupation which she quitted, on his entrance, with a look of welcome, and seating the good old priest in an easy chair, herself at his feet, hoped that nothing painful had occasioned the very serious expression which his features happened to wear. At the question, the venerable gentleman smiled upon his favourite, and relieved her solicitude by saying that nothing had occurred but what should be of joyful interest to them all; he then explained his meaning.

"About six months ago, Helena, on the feast of St. Paul's conversion, we had just finished evening service in the church at hand here,—your brother Paul had preached—do you remember that evening? You were all at church."

"Yes, I do. His subject was 'the power of Faith,' and the happiness of being in subjection to the Church.

I was praying that any Protestants present might be moved by his words. Dear Paul! he seemed half inspired that evening."

"Well, dear child, it pleased God some one was present in whom you all take an interest, and for whom your continual prayers have been heard, I believe. When service was over, a young lady, closely veiled, came round to the house, and earnestly begged to speak with the preacher of that sermon. Your brother saw her, and was greatly interested by what she told him. She said that, although educated in opposing, and, it appears, very illiberal, principles, she had for some time had a yearning wish to know something of our doctrines; that she had two or three times secretly attended our services; and now, after hearing that evening's discourse, she experienced the greatest interior disturbance, and could not feel at rest until her questions were answered, and her doubts settled. This poor young lady was in a position full of trial, without a Catholic book or acquaintance, her friends, and her mother, especially, of such intolerant sentiments, that they would have regarded her with horror had they known what was disquieting her mind."

"Oh! sir, is it?—it is Miss Overstein!" interrupted Helena, her cheeks crimson with pleasure.

Father Lawrence smiled benignantly.

"You little rogue, I meant to keep that secret to the end; but you are too quick for me. Your brother could not undertake her instruction, as he was going for some weeks on a mission,—so he brought her to me. I did my best, and have been edified by the earnestness and the generosity of that dear soul. She is now a sincere Catholic."

"Thank God—dear Cesarina! But her mother, sir?"

"Her mother, Helena, has been, and is, her sharp thorn in the side, as you will see. Miss Overstein prudently kept everything quiet until her search had ended in conviction: she then opened her heart to her mother, and begged that she would be reasonable and kind. The poor woman, however, is remarkably pre-

judiced, and—well, she would listen to neither expostulation nor entreaty, and bade her daughter either give up the practices of her new creed, or never carry them on in *her* house. Miss Overstein, by my advice, sought a temporary home, as parlour boarder, in the convent whither your sister Anna has retired.”

“Dear, courageous child! Oh, how could her mother have the heart to do it!” exclaimed Teresa, who had entered, and was a deeply attentive listener.

“She had intended to stay there until her parent’s affection should revive, as she hoped it would, and permit her to exercise liberty of conscience at home; but Almighty God seems to have other designs upon her, for during her residence at the convent, she has felt a great attraction to the religious life, and at length, on her earnest entreaty, has been admitted to the noviceship there. She put on the postulant’s dress yesterday; and hopes you will go to see her, Helena, for she says *you* first awoke her to a sense of neglected duties and wasted days; *you* first made her think it possible that Catholics can be good or reasonable beings—you staunch little papist!”

Thus signally He who brings light out of darkness had frustrated the intolerant, though well-meaning, attempts of those who persecuted His Faithful, and by their very hands had drawn a soul, precious and chosen, from the cradle of unconscious Error.

The converted life of Miss Overstein was as brief as fervent. Towards the close of her noviciate, she was attacked by a fever caught in the ministry of her duties, and succumbed beneath its violence. She rallied to receive the religious veil, on her urgent supplication, and then immediately went to meet her celestial Bridegroom, his safe and most happy spouse. Teresa and her children would often go to their devotions with a tear, after reading, in the porch of their Church, the simple appeal which entreated the Faithful to

Pray for the repose
of
Sister Mary Paula,
Who departed this Life
In the 28th year of her age,
And on the day of her Religious Profession.
R. I. P.

"Will aunt Mary be a nun, too?" was a question often anxiously asked by little nephews and nieces, when her duty was fulfilled, the object of her enduring love gone, in grateful peace, from her mortal sight, her lot once more single on earth. No, Mary is one of those whose sweet example is needed among us, and she is not called from the world. Unobtrusive her beautiful life has always been, and so it will remain; but how solidly useful, and how beloved, let the young kinsfolk of another generation rise up to testify.

We found the sisters together, and together, after long separation, we leave them,—Life's rough voyage almost over, the sea smooth, both tranquilly waiting at the harbour's mouth. She, especially, whose lot has been the harder, may thankfully realise the after-calm, remembering that if "the waves rose, and the winds blew," she must blame the hardihood which wilfully ventured into dangerous places, and that if destruction did not ensue, it was because tender Intercession and Infinite Mercy pitied and followed her. May her trials deter others from going the same forbidden and uncertain way.

THE END.







